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## THE CHORUS OF EURIPIDES

BY ARISTIDES EVANGELUS PHOUTRIDES

### I. DEFENCE OF SUPPOSED FAULTS

#### 1. THE LENGTH OF THE CHORAL PARTS

PERHAPS no other author of antiquity, with the exception of Aristotle, has caused more confusion to critics than Euripides. From Aristophanes and Antiphanes to Schlegel and Goethe, he has been praised and satirized with the warmest admiration and the bitterest invective. In our own day, the difference of conception with regard to "sad Electra's poet" might lead an unsophisticated student of the subconscious to explain the case of Euripides as a dual personality. Certainly, Shorey's Euripides is as distant from Gilbert Murray's as Aristophanes is in spirit from Aeschylus. Nor is this divergency of opinion limited to a uniform appreciation or depreciation of the poet. There are more puzzling subdivisions in either party. Each friend or foe finds his own grounds for admiration or contempt, and we can hardly find two persons whose premises or conclusions are in every respect identical. One critic attributes to Euripides characteristics which another denies, and the more we read about the poet the less we are apt to understand him.

The astonishing versatility of our tragedian makes him the Proteus of Dramatic Literature. There are passages in his works which rise to Aeschylean grandeur; others, which are full of Sophoclean serenity; and others, which startle us with the modern spirit of Shakespeare or Ibsen. A chronic bitterness links Electra with Lady Inger. The atmosphere of fancy envelops Miranda as well as Helena. In Hecuba's fortunes, we are reminded of the sorrows of Queen Margaret. Romance, gallant knights, ladies fair, fanciful adventures are not unknown to Euripides. Minor details assisting in the creation of realistic situations and characters are seldom discarded. Human passions

so preponderate over other motives characteristic of the Hellenic drama, that Euripides is more easily read and more boldly translated by moderns than either Aeschylus or Sophocles.

What is true of the poet in general is also true of the choral element of his drama. There are numerous critics who seriously believe that Euripides has brought decadence into the tragic chorus and that he has not only minimized its part but has even dealt with it impatiently and negligently. When Goethe speaks of the chorus in Euripides as a "burdensome tradition useless and discordant,"<sup>1</sup> he voices the feelings of many of our poet's detractors. But the typical popular view is expressed in the words of a German scholar:<sup>2</sup> "The Euripidean chorus," says Stolte, "has lost its own power and character and changed its function. Indeed, it has either so far receded from the plot that there is no connection between it and the characters of the drama, as is the case in the *Phoenician Women* and in the *Iphigenia at Aulis*, or, where it does not entirely stand apart from the action, its relation is very remote, as in the *Hecuba*, the *Hercules*, and others. . . ." The same writer a little later follows closely the opinion expressed by Bernhardt and others:<sup>3</sup> "Thus the chorus of Euripides, following the example of the epic poets, figures in many a tragedy as a careless and uninterested spectator, who, instead of giving utterance to universal reflections, indulges in long narratives that have nothing to do with the substance of the play or with the nature of the chorus. For the function of the chorus is not so much to relate as it is to reflect on things. Far from doing this, the chorus seems to be anxious to while away the time by singing various songs, which, full of charming descriptions and metaphors though they are, cannot escape the charge of being foreign to the plot and very similar to mere interludes. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> *Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Zeller*, edited by F. W. Riemer, Berlin, 1833, pt. 1, p. 69 (letter 29): ". . . der Chor erscheint oft als ein lästiges Herkommen, als ein aufgerbtes Inventariestück. Er wird unnöthig und also, in einem lebendigen poetischen Ganzen, gleich unnütz, lästig, und zerstörend. . . ."

<sup>2</sup> Franz Stolte, *De chori, qualis in perfecta Graecorum tragoedia apparet, ratione et indole*. Jahresber. über das koenigliche Progymnasium Nepomucenum zu Rietberg für 1881-82. Paderborn, 1882.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. G. Bernhardt, *Grundriss der griech. Literatur*, Halle, 1876-80, ii 2, p. 437.

Ill fate is pursuing Euripides even after his death, it seems. The creator of the most charming feminine types in the ancient drama is constantly branded as a woman-hater! The poet of the *Suppliant Women* and of the *Bacchae* is denounced as a satirist and contemner of the popular gods! No wonder then that his choruses, too, are found at fault, and that there are some critics who even think that as much connection exists between Euripidean chorus and drama as between the lyric effusions and the drama of Seneca.

Against these accusations only a careful study of Euripides himself can offer effective assistance. To lessen the importance of the chorus it would have been necessary for our poet either to shorten the parts that were to be recited by the chorus, to curtail the dialogue between the chorus and the actors, or to make the chorus entirely ineffective, disinterested onlookers at the action in the play, without motive or passion sufficiently strong to render them participants of the plot.

But has he diminished the rôle of the chorus? Or, at least, has he in this respect gone farther than his predecessors? That we may stand on firm ground, let us examine numerically the parts each of the three tragic poets has given to his choruses in comparison with the parts ceded to the rest of the actors. The figures from the tragedies of Aeschylus are as follows:

| Title of Drama                                    | Verses in<br>the Drama | Choral<br>Part |
|---|------------------------|----------------|
| Supplices . . . . .                               | 1074                   | 650            |
| Persae . . . . .                                  | 1076                   | 500            |
| Septem . . . . .                                  | 1084                   | 487            |
| Prometheus . . . . .                              | 1094                   | 201            |
| Agamemnon . . . . .                               | 1674                   | 838            |
| Choephoroe . . . . .                              | 1076                   | 452            |
| Eumenides . . . . .                               | 1047                   | 434            |
| <hr/>   |                        | <hr/>          |
| Seven Plays . . . . .                             | 8124                   | 3562           |
| Maximum in the chorus of the Supplices . . . . .  |                        | 0.60...        |
| Minimum in the chorus of the Prometheus . . . . . |                        | 0.18...        |
| Average choral part in Aeschylus . . . . .        |                        | 0.43...        |

From these figures we see that of eight thousand one hundred and twenty-four verses included in the seven extant dramas of Aeschylus, three thousand five hundred and sixty-two belong to the chorus. The



longest choral part is found in the *Supplices*, in which, of one thousand and seventy-four verses, the chorus has six hundred and fifty, i. e., sixty per cent of the whole play. The shortest Aeschylean chorus is that of the *Prometheus*, where of the one thousand and ninety-four verses of the play only two hundred and one belong to the chorus, which is no more than eighteen per cent. These examples, found in the same author, show not a small difference and are clear witnesses of the boldness with which Aeschylus treats his own art.<sup>1</sup>

Sophocles follows always a middle path. Reckoning according to the colometry found in Jebb's edition, we gather the following figures:

| Title of Drama                         | Verses in<br>the Drama | Choral<br>Part |
|--|------------------------|----------------|
| Oedipus Rex.....                       | 1530                   | 312            |
| Oedipus at Colonus.....                | 1779                   | 384            |
| Antigone.....                          | 1353                   | 358            |
| Ajax.....                              | 1420                   | 344            |
| Electra.....                           | 1510                   | 221            |
| Trachiniae.....                        | 1278                   | 242            |
| Philoctetes.....                       | 1471                   | 228            |
| <hr/>                                  |                        | <hr/>          |
| Seven Plays.....                       | 10341                  | 2089           |
| Maximum in the chorus of Antigone..... |                        | 0.26...        |
| Minimum in the chorus of Electra.....  |                        | 0.14...        |
| Average choral part in Sophocles.....  |                        | 0.20...        |

The seven plays of Sophocles contain altogether ten thousand three hundred and forty-one verses. Two thousand and eighty-nine, i. e., about twenty per cent of these verses belong to the chorus. Thus we find in Sophocles a greater evenness than in Aeschylus. The average choral part in the former is a little more than the minimum choral part in the latter, and while in Aeschylus the chorus varies from sixty per cent to eighteen per cent, in Sophocles its variance is limited between twenty-six and fourteen per cent.

What of Euripides? Using the colometry of Murray's text in the Oxford edition, we arrive at the following numbers:

<sup>1</sup> The numeration has been made according to the colometry of Sidgwick's text in the Oxford edition.

| Title of Drama                                   | Verses in<br>the Drama | Choral<br>Part |
|--|------------------------|----------------|
| Cyclops . . . . .                                | 709                    | 195            |
| Alcestis . . . . .                               | 1163                   | 301            |
| Medea . . . . .                                  | 1419                   | 295            |
| Heracleidae . . . . .                            | 1055                   | 205            |
| Hippolytus . . . . .                             | 1466                   | 325            |
| Andromache . . . . .                             | 1288                   | 245            |
| Hecuba . . . . .                                 | 1295                   | 231            |
| Supplices . . . . .                              | 1230                   | 275            |
| Hercules . . . . .                               | 1428                   | 398            |
| Ion . . . . .                                    | 1622                   | 294            |
| Troïades . . . . .                               | 1332                   | 331            |
| Electra . . . . .                                | 1359                   | 294            |
| Iphigenia Taurica . . . . .                      | 1499                   | 279            |
| Helena . . . . .                                 | 1692                   | 284            |
| Phoenissae . . . . .                             | 1766                   | 278            |
| Orestes . . . . .                                | 1693                   | 222            |
| Bacchae . . . . .                                | 1392                   | 399            |
| Iphigenia Aulidensis . . . . .                   | 1629                   | 368            |
| Rhesus . . . . .                                 | 996                    | 307            |
| <hr/>  |                        | <hr/>          |
| Nineteen Plays . . . . .                         | 26133                  | 5526           |
| Maximum in the chorus of Rhesus . . . . .        |                        | 0.30...        |
| Next to the maximum is Cyclops with . . . . .    |                        | 0.27...        |
| Minimum in the chorus of Orestes . . . . .       |                        | 0.13...        |
| Next to the minimum is Phoenissae with . . . . . |                        | 0.15...        |
| Average choral part in Euripides . . . . .       |                        | 0.21...        |

Of the twenty-six thousand one hundred and thirty-three verses which are contained in the nineteen extant plays, five thousand five hundred and twenty-six are devoted to the chorus, that is, twenty-one per cent of the whole work of Euripides is choral. If we compare with these figures those of Sophocles, we find that the percentage in Euripides is even larger than that of his predecessor. Since, however, the difference is rather small, we may with justice assert that both Euripides and Sophocles have given one-fifth of their drama to the chorus. The maximum choral part is found in the *Rhesus*, where a little less than one-third, or about thirty per cent of the whole play is assumed by the chorus. But since there are many who would deny the Euripidean authorship of this play, let us consider the play that stands next to it, i. e., the *Cyclops*. The difference is insignificant. Of the seven

hundred and nine verses of this indisputably Euripidean play, one hundred and ninety-five, i. e., twenty-seven per cent, belong to the chorus. On the other hand, the minimum choral part in Euripides is found in the *Orestes*, the chorus of which sings or speaks two hundred and twenty-two, i. e., thirteen per cent of the total of one thousand six hundred and ninety-three verses. The minimum choral part in Sophocles is fourteen per cent, but the difference is too insignificant to be taken into consideration, and is exactly balanced by the difference we have found in the maximum data. After studying these figures, how can we account for the common accusation that Euripides has shortened the choral parts? Indeed, if any one of the three tragedians must be accused, why not look to Aeschylus rather than Euripides? Is it not true that Aeschylus has shortened the choral rôle from sixty to eighteen per cent? This boldness cannot be charged against Euripides, who has preferred either to preserve or even to increase the Sophoclean measure, but may never be justly accused of having reduced it.

## 2. THE CHORUS IN DIALOGUE

The question of the dialogue is an even more difficult one to determine. For if we had preserved only seven plays of Euripides, and these seven were the *Ion*, the *Orestes*, the *Alcestis*, the *Bacchae*, the *Hercules*, the *Supplices*, and the *Rhesus*, there would be no difficulty in forming an unvarying opinion. In all these plays, the dialogue between the chorus and the actors is by no means of less importance than in Sophocles' tragedies. In the *Supplices*, the chief interest centres about the unfortunate mothers of the princes who died before the walls of Thebes. They form a chorus of suppliants and concentrate the sympathies of the spectators. In Sophocles, we have not a parallel case. True, the old Thebans through dialogue with Oedipus persuade their wrathful king to restrain himself from inflicting a heavy punishment on Creon, a fact which corroborates my belief that the chorus is not always ineffective even in the action of the Sophoclean drama.<sup>1</sup> Yet

<sup>1</sup> *Oed. R.* 649-696, especially v. 649:

Chorus: *πιθοῦ θελήσας φρονήσας τ', ἀναξ, λίσσομαι.*

and v. 669:

Creon: *ὁ δ' οὖν ἴτω . . .*

*τὸ γὰρ σὸν, οὐ τὸ τοῦδ', ἐποικτίρω στόμα . . .*

it is Euripides who furnishes us with most convincing examples of choral activity in dialogue. In the *Ion*, the chorus not only is effective, but it mingles with the action and stands by its sympathies with a boldness which far surpasses that of any Sophoclean chorus, and which reminds us very strongly of the choral conceptions of Aeschylus. The young Athenian women who have accompanied Creusa, their queen, to Delphi are threatened with the extreme penalty of death in case they disclose to their mistress Xuthus' relation to Ion. Yet they are so overcome by their sympathy for their maltreated queen, that they dare divulge the secret and enter upon a most dangerous conspiracy against the life of the foundling. We even miss in them that resignation and hesitancy which are the characteristics not only of the post-Aeschylean chorus but of the chorus of Aeschylus himself. For in the moment of crisis, we see them forgetting entirely their own danger and suggesting to the pursued queen the only course of safety.<sup>1</sup>

I should point to the importance of the dialogue part of the chorus in the *Cyclops*, the *Hercules*, and other plays; but I pass over these for the present to come to the most astonishing of all Euripidean choruses, that of the *Rhesus*. For, although I am aware of the doubts which Scaliger, Hermann, and their followers have cast upon the authorship of this play, I cannot help feeling with Paley and other opponents<sup>2</sup> that there is so much of Euripides in the *Rhesus* that it is to be wondered why its genuineness has ever been questioned. Why should we be impatient about allowing our poet to retain his own property? In this tragedy, the chorus of guards open the play. Indeed, this is not the only example in Euripides of a chorus being on the stage at the rise or — according to the methods of ancient theatre management — the fall of the curtain. At the opening of the *Sup-*

<sup>1</sup> *Ion*, 1255-1260.

<sup>2</sup> Bothe, Dindorf, Vater, etc. See: Josephi Scaligeri, *Ad Manilium Prolegomena*, p. vi ff., and Virgil. *Catal.*, L. Bat. 1617, p. 31; Godofredi Hermanni, *Observationes de Graecae linguae dictis*, p. ix ff.; *Opuscula*, vol. i, p. 136 and vol. iii, p. 262; *Elementa doctrinae metricae*, p. 124. Chr. Dan. Beckii, *Diatribam criticam de Rheso supposititio Euripidis dramate quae exstat in editione Euripidis Barnesio-Musgraviana*, vol. iii, p. 444. Against these cf. Matthiae, *Eurip.* viii, p. 2 ff.; Aug. Boeckhii, *Secunda de Sophoclis Antigona commentat.* in *Actis Acad. Boruss.*, 1828, p. 110, note 1. Frid. Bothii, *ed. Lips.*, 1825, p. 55 note. Ludov. Dindorfii, *ed. Lips.* 1825; and especially Friderici Vateri, *Eurip. Rhes.*, Berolini, 1837.

*plices*, Aethra, while delivering the prologue, is not only facing from the very start the mourning mothers of the slain chiefs, but makes it understood that they have already been in this suppliant attitude for some time and have won her sympathy. The opening of the *Heracidae* is another illustration of the same usage. But in the *Rhesus*, we have something more than the presence of the chorus. The guards have the first lines and they call out Hector in order to announce to him what must begin the action of the play. I can show in Sophocles no choral dialogue of the same importance as that of the chorus in the *Rhesus*, when the guards actually seize Odysseus. Indeed, as far as physical action on the part of the chorus is concerned, this scene is unique in all ancient tragedy. It has been observed that the nearest that an ancient chorus comes to physical action is in the scene between Aegisthus and the old Argives who form the chorus in the *Agamemnon* (1622ff.). Yet why should this instance be put above the chorus of the *Hercules*? Like the chorus of the *Agamemnon*, they are feeble, tottering, helpless. But when the cowardly tyrant Lycus dares threaten with death the harmless children and wife of their absent hero, they have the courage to raise their staves and to attempt to fight against the cruel oppressor (252 ff.). Clytaemnestra in the *Agamemnon* interferes to restrain further bloodshed; in the Euripidean play, it is Megara, the menaced wife of Hercules who averts an actual fight. In the *Rhesus*, however, physical action is not only threatened, but is performed. The chorus of guards trace Odysseus, seize him, and do not let him go free before he gives the password of the Trojans. This action is accompanied by a very vivid dialogue between the chorus and the disguised spy, and there is hardly any other moment in the tragedy which creates a greater suspense than this (674-691).

If we had only the seven or eight plays we have mentioned, our conclusion would be that Euripides has not diminished but rather intensified the part which the chorus take in the dialogue. But can we draw the same conclusion from the rest of the nineteen plays that have come down to us? The chorus of the *Andromache* and of the *Iphigenia among the Taurians* engage very little in dialogue, and that of the *Iphigenia at Aulis* seems to be entirely disregarded by all actors. The same taciturnity is observed in the choruses of the *Phoe-*

*nissae*, the *Troades*, and the *Electra*. Are we then to carry from these examples the impression that Euripides has after all minimized the dialogue of the tragic chorus? But if we compare with these our first series of plays, we must draw two entirely opposite conclusions. Is it not possible to explain this apparent inconsistency by examining into the nature of reticent or talkative choruses? Instead of attributing to Euripides an arbitrary operation upon the dialogue part of the chorus, may we not discover a natural reason for what seems to be a startling innovation? I venture to suspect such a reasonable cause. What appears as an innovation is only a natural course which might have been taken by Sophocles or by Aeschylus, a course which these tragedians might even have followed in some of their lost dramas.

Let us compare a few of the bold and the timid choruses respectively. We have already noticed that the chorus in the *Ion* consists of young maidens, attendants of Creusa. They have come to Delphi following their queen, who is in great distress. Owing to what she deems to be Apollo's faithlessness, she has lost the child to which she had many years ago given birth. Since that time, she has been married to a foreign prince who has become the king of Athens, but she has remained childless. No heir has been born to the kingdom of Athens. How can she prevent the utter extinction of the royal house in which she was born? Her attendants are devoted to her, participants of her affliction, and sharers of her great secret as is shown from the concealed allusions they make to it in the end of the first stasimon (vv. 492 ff.):

ᾠ Πανὸς θακήματα καὶ  
 παρυνλίζουσα πέτρα  
 μυχώδεσι Μακραῖς, . . .  
 ἵνα τεκοῦσά τις Φοῖβῳ  
 παρθένος, ὦ μελέα, βρέφος,  
 πτανοῖς ἐξόρισεν θοῖναν  
 θηρσί τε φοινίαν δαῖτα, πικρῶν γάμων  
 ὕβριν. . .

To be admitted into the very secret which is the source of Creusa's shame and unhappiness, they must undoubtedly be of proved faithfulness and loyalty. With determined courage, they stand by their

queen, who, at the same time, is their trusting friend. Thus it is only too natural to witness them resenting what they consider to be a foreign adventurer's betrayal not only of their queen but of their city. They will not have a bastard ruling over Athens, and, against the threats of Xuthus, who depends too much upon servants' submissiveness, they disclose the plot, connive at the vengeful conspiracy, and suggest to their mistress in the critical moment of danger the only way to safety.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Alceſtis*, the chorus consists of elders of the city of Pherae. Their king is under the bane of death and is saved only through the noble self-sacrifice of their queen. They are free-born citizens whose fortunes are involved in the fortunes of their rulers. They have a right to speak, to question, to suggest. Thus they make the attendant woman explain to them the grievous state of the royal house, they question Hercules on his journey, they express their surprise at their king's excessive hospitality, and they share with him in the funeral dirge.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, we may account for the boldness of the chorus in the *Rhesus*. They are soldiers set to guard the Trojan camp in the night. It is their duty to announce to their chief what they consider ominous during their watch. Thus they do not hesitate to wake up Hector, to take part in the argument between him and Aeneas, to point out to their proud leader his error in his cool reception of Rhesus, to suspect him of treachery, to seize a suspect. Their intervention in the dialogue is most consistent with the exigencies of the plot of the play.<sup>3</sup> In the same manner, it is natural for the Bacchantes, the inspired followers of Dionysus, to oppose openly the persecutor of their god's cult and to express their exultation at their god's triumph over the impious king, — however revengful and horrible it may be;<sup>4</sup> for the old devoted followers of Hercules, to forget in the moment of a revolting cruelty, exercised upon their hero's relatives, their white hair and weak frames and to raise their hands against the blood-thirsty tyrant;<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ion*, 213-237; 566-569; 752-859; 1106 ff.; 1250 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Alc.* 141, 456, 551, 861 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Rhes.* 1, 131, 327, 674, 729, 804 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Bacch.* 576, 604, 775, 1024, 1153 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Herc.* 234, 875, 1041, 1427 ff.

for the free citizens of Athens in the *Heraclidae*, to declare openly their sympathies for the cause of the wronged;<sup>1</sup> and for the Suppliant Women, to call for help on Aethra, a mother herself, and, therefore, capable of understanding the depth of a mother's woe.<sup>2</sup>

But what of the reticent choruses? In the *Phoenissae*, the chorus consists of women who

Afar from the tides against Tyre's walls swelling,  
For Loxias chosen an offering,  
From the Isle of Phoenicia . . . came to be thrall  
Unto Phoebus, to serve in his palace-hall  
Where 'neath crags of Parnassus . . .  
. . . he hath made him a dwelling.<sup>3</sup>

On their way, they have stopped at Thebes, the land of the children of Cadmus, by lineage the same people with their fathers. In spite of their kinship with the Thebans, they are practically in a state of exile. In the beleaguered city that a son of their common ancestor had founded, they feel a touching sympathy for it, pray for its safety, and are concerned in its fate; but their interest is somewhat distant, and they have not the courage to interfere with the great action which is developed before their eyes. Contrary to the habit of a chorus, they do not at first address Polynices when he enters with a terrified air, but they modestly refrain from speech, and it is only after a comparatively long address of the newcomer that they answer him, a fellow-exile.<sup>4</sup> In the same manner, they modestly listen to Menoeceus' noble resolution, and it is only when he has departed that they sing of the noble courage and wisdom which characterize the house of the Earth-born in spite of the ill fate that pursues them. Even in the extremely pathetic dirge of Antigone and Oedipus, their sympathetic utterance is short, and, although it bursts out uncontrolled at the miserable sight of the procession bearing the corpses, it is soon suppressed before the presence of the woeful sister and father (1480).

Nothing could be more natural than the self-restraint and reticence of these Phoenician maidens at the sight of woes with which their

<sup>1</sup> *Heracl.* 73, 329, 961 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Suppl.* 1, 634, 798, 1123 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Phoen.* 202 ff. Translation by Arthur Way.

<sup>4</sup> *Phoen.* 280 ff.



kinship urged them to sympathize, but with which their present distance reminded them that they had no right to interfere. Their attitude is not less justifiable than that of the chorus of Theban women in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, who being natives of the city endangered by its rulers' feud have reasons to look with greater anxiety upon the great crisis, to express their fear and agony against the warnings of Eteocles, and even to attempt to dissuade their stubborn king from taking the fatal course which he is resolved to follow. Theban women would naturally play their bold and impulsive rôle in the city of their birth, a rôle which would naturally be very different from that of foreign women whose stay in the Cadmean city is only temporary and whose familiarity with the actors depends entirely upon a distant relationship.

Another chorus of few words in dialogue is that in the *Andromache*. It consists of women of Phthia, who, proud of their free parentage and native origin, feel at the same time a little sympathy with Andromache, the slave of noble blood, the unfortunate princess of Troy. But their position is embarrassing. In the first place, they cannot freely express their own thoughts before the gates of the palace of Neoptolemus, because their king is absent, and they fear the impulsive revengefulness of Hermione and the treacherous methods of her father, the Spartan king, greedy of power and cruel in heart. On the other hand, they cannot easily approach Andromache. The noble wife of Hector is absorbed in her own sad fortune. Bereft of a glorious husband, torn away from the city of her fathers, which she saw laid low with sword and fire, dragged to a foreign land in bondage to the son of the very man who had slain her Hector, in the moment of her danger, she neither publishes her grief, nor looks for sympathy to a crowd of native women. In her days of bondage, she can still hold a dignity becoming a noble princess, a quality which not only enrages the impulsive young bride who plots against her life, but also keeps back her sympathizers. The women of Phthia feel this dignified attitude of the tormented princess, and they, unable to reconcile it with the present state of affairs, explain it as a pride that even slights their sympathy. Under the circumstances, they naturally check themselves and assume a reserved, reticent attitude in dialogue and a highly reflective and retrospective mood in their odes.

The chorus in the *Medea* is of the same kind. They are Corinthian women who come to express their sympathies with a foreign princess wronged in her conjugal rights. It is natural for them also to be reticent. Yet we find them engaging in dialogue more often than the women of Phthia and expressing a sympathy far more vivid than that expressed for Andromache. What makes this difference? Why do the women of Corinth stand so firmly by a foreign princess against their own ruling house? I should point out that the women in the *Andromache* see more justice on the side of Hermione, who, being a lawful wife, is slighted by Neoptolemus on account of Andromache; whereas the women of Corinth see justice entirely on the side of Medea, a woman like them, who has been abandoned for another woman by a calculating husband. But the main cause of the difference is the attitude of Medea toward the chorus. The daughter of Aetes knows not the dignity of the daughter of Priam. She freely approaches her sympathizers, and, through her confidence, she wins them all the more to her cause. The chorus's sympathetic appeal is immediately answered, and the women of Corinth feel thus a certain courage and strength in their stand for Medea which the women of Phthia could not feel for Andromache. Yet even in the *Medea*, the chorus do not take the important part in the dialogue which a chorus more related to the heroine might have taken. Is it not natural that they should do so?

Then there is the *Iphigenia at Aulis*. Here not a chance is given to the chorus to engage in dialogue. The women of Chalcis often try to take a part in the conversation, but they are hardly ever deemed worthy of an answer. When Menelaus has finished his spirited complaint against Agamemnon (376), the chorus give the ineffective advice that "it is a bad thing for brothers to quarrel," but Agamemnon makes his answer directly to Menelaus, and gives no sign of recognition to the women. Thus throughout the play a verse or two is often spoken by the chorus in the different scenes, but their voice is the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Even the messenger of the miraculous sacrifice will not notice the presence of the chorus, but appeals directly to Clytaemnestra, who is in the house, to come forth and hear what he has seen. The unfortunate women, who could not check their curiosity to see the great camp of the gathered forces of the Greeks, may have free vent of their thoughts only in the odes which they sing

exclusively to themselves. But who are they, and why are they on the field of action? They have no relation whatever, and, perhaps, they are entirely unknown to the Greek chiefs of the camp at Aulis. They are women of Chalcis, who have left their city and crossed the waters of Euripus for a purpose entirely unrelated to the plot of the play. Their presence is due to the motive of mere curiosity, a quality strong with women. They have left their homes to see the great armaments of Greece kept in their neighborhood by adverse winds. It is only by chance that they witness a great tragic event. It is, therefore, natural that their presence and their words should be entirely disregarded by the Greek chiefs and their associates for the good reason that Agamemnon, or Menelaus, Clytaemnestra, or Iphigenia, Achilles, or the Messenger could have no excuse to take into their confidence the curious crowds which must have daily flocked from Chalcis or other places about Aulis to see the imposing spectacle of the forces of Greece gathered into one.

These examples should suffice us in drawing our conclusion. What is taken for a bold innovation in Euripides is only a natural course. Perhaps we might have had the same thing in a chorus of Sophocles or Aeschylus, if we had preserved for us more of their works. As it is, we have no play of either of the great writers in which a chorus is presented bearing the same relation to the plot as that of the *Phoenissae*, the *Andromache*, or the *Iphigenia at Aulis*. The nearest that we come to such a relation in Sophocles is in the chorus of the *Trachinian Women*. They are women of the city which has given shelter to Hercules and Deianira. Their relation to the hero and the heroine, especially to the latter, is similar to the relation of the Corinthian women to Medea, i. e., they are friends and sympathizers and are heartily recognized as such by Deianira. But their relation is of a closer and more intimate type, because there is no conflict against it, whereas the Corinthian women must sympathize with Medea against their own rulers. Moreover there is no criminal revengefulness to be found in the wife of Hercules as in Medea. Hence the chorus in their relation to the heroine are not hindered in any way by crime or conflict and can engage in dialogue more freely than the Corinthian women. Yet, even here, we find a certain reserve, a fondness for reflective thought which is natural with people not immediately affected by the evolved calami-

ties. Aeschylus also furnishes us with the puzzling example of the chorus in the *Prometheus Bound*. The tender-hearted daughters of Oceanus come to the rocks of Scythia to comfort the great Titan who dares stand against the victorious Zeus. Their sympathy for the sufferer is sincere and pathetic, and it is only before them that Prometheus will give vent to his woe. Yet there is a restraint in this chorus, which, but for the existence of the play, we should never have imagined as Aeschylean. The daughters of Oceanus cannot help, cannot even follow Prometheus' gigantic will or thought, but they can sympathize with him because he suffers, as it appears to them, unjustly. In their position, they cannot indulge in great activity, nor can they freely express their thoughts. For there is Zeus, who can inflict terrible penalties at will, and there is Prometheus, who is too great and too wilful even to encourage them to advise. Now if we find in Aeschylus, the poet for whom the chorus stood generally as the chief actor, such a subordinate rôle as that of the Oceanides, why should we force on Euripides exclusively the novelty of mutilating choral dialogue? If we had in Aeschylus or Sophocles a chorus of the same nature as that of the Phoenician Women or of the Women of Chalcis, is there no good reason to believe that either of these poets might have done what Euripides did? To conclude, in certain plays of Euripides, the dialogue part of the chorus is eminently curtailed, but this is true only of those plays in which the choral reticence is in accordance with the character of the chorus, and, therefore, too natural to be considered as an arbitrary novelty introduced by Euripides.

### 3. THE CHORAL ODES

The next point to be considered is how far are the choral odes in Euripides, as a whole, consistent with the plot? Is the choral so ineffective that it may be detached from the play? Is it true that in the odes the *choreutae* become disinterested spectators of the action without motive or passion strong enough to make them participants of the plot? These questions have been partly answered in the discussion of the dialogue. But they involve a most intricate controversy, and they deserve a careful consideration. We may fairly assume that the originator of the controversy is Aristotle, who, in his *Poetic Art*, enjoins

that "the chorus, too, should be regarded as one of the actors; it should be a part of the whole and participate in the contest of action *not in the manner of Euripides but in that of Sophocles*. With the later poets, the parts sung by the chorus are not less inconsistent with the plot than they would be if they belonged to another tragedy. Hence, following the method established first by Agathon, they sing mere interludes. And yet what is the difference between singing interludes and taking a speech or episode from the part where it belongs in order to fit it somewhere else?"<sup>1</sup> What may Aristotle mean when he remarks that the chorus must take part in the action *not in the manner of Euripides but in that of Sophocles*? The Greek reads: μή ὡς περ Εὐριπίδῃ ἀλλ' ὡς περ Σοφοκλεῖ. Hartung<sup>2</sup> found so little justification for this statement that he did not hesitate to attempt an emendation of the text into ὡς παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ ἢ ὡς παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ which would certainly give us a more plausible meaning, "in the manner of Euripides or of Sophocles," and would, according to the emendator, more fittingly precede the following antithetical phrase τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς. However, the fact is that Aristotle neither here nor elsewhere corroborates this strange assertion. Indeed, if we consider a previous statement by the same author,<sup>3</sup> according to which Euripides is praised as the most tragic of the poets, τραγικώτατός γε τῶν ποιητῶν, it is difficult to overlook the inconsistency of this praise with the former fault-finding. The doubt which has been cast upon the authenticity of the passage has, as we see, a strong foundation. Yet it has given rise to a long series of unjust accusations against the choral parts of Euripides. His odes are called again and again irrelevant, while it has become the fashion to call his stasima interludes or *embolima*. There are even some who think that they do not differ much from the parabasis in

<sup>1</sup> Arist. *Art. Poet.* 1456 A, cf. Horat. *Ep.* 2, 3, 193:

Actoris partes chorus officiumque virile  
defendat, neu quid medios intercinat actus  
quod non proposito conducat et haereat apte.

Cf. the fragment of Accius found in Nonius 178, 23: "Sed Euripides, qui choros temerarius in fabulis. . . ."

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Hartung, *Euripides Restitutus*. Hamburg and Gotha, 1844, ii, p. 369; also *Lehren der Allen über die Dichtkunst*. Hamburg and Gotha, 1845, pp. 157, 159, 160.

<sup>3</sup> *Art. Poet.* 1453 A.

Aristophanes.<sup>1</sup> Of course, it is impossible to deny that more than once we come upon a stasimon in Euripides which, at first sight, strikes us as an irrelevant digression. But if we only take the time to think, we shall discover a higher relevancy than we imagine. Let us examine some of the most familiar "interludes."

In the *Medea* after the departure of Aegeus, the enraged daughter of Aeetes declares her plan to slay her children in order to take vengeance upon her faithless husband. The chorus of Corinthian women are overwhelmed with the terror of the deed, but, in the song which they sing before silent Medea, they go through one strophe and one anti-strophe with no allusion to the proposed deed: (v. 824 ff.)

Ἐρεχθεΐδαι τὸ παλαιὸν ὄλβιοι  
καὶ θεῶν παῖδες μακάρων, ἱερᾶς  
χώρας ἀπορθήτου τ' ἄπο, φερβόμενοι  
κλεινοτάταν σοφίαν, αἰεὶ διὰ λαμπροτάτου  
βαίνοντες ἀβρώς αἰθέρος, ἔνθα ποθ' ἀγνὰς  
ἐννέα Πιερίδας Μούσας λέγουσι  
ξανθὰν Ἀρμονίαν φυτεῦσαι.

Τοῦ καλλινάου τ' ἐπὶ Κηφισοῦ ῥοαῖς  
τὴν Κύπριν κλήζουσιν ἀφυσσασμένην  
χώραν καταπνεῦσαι μετρίας ἀνέμων  
ἡδυπνόους αὔρας· αἰεὶ δ' ἐπιβαλλομένην  
χαίταισιν εὐώδη ῥοδέων πλόκον ἀνθέων  
τᾷ Σοφίᾳ παρέδρους πέμπειν Ἑρωτας,  
παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνεργούς.

Now at the first reading of this passage, we are tempted to ask with indignation what have these sentiments on the charms of Athens to do with a mother on her way to slay her children? Is this a logical plea for averting the deed? To justify the verses with the mere remark — more than once repeated — that the author intended to pay his compliments to his Athenian audience is somewhat trite. Undoubtedly, Euripides wrote these beautiful strophes to extol the city of Athens just as Sophocles devoted to the same purpose his famous ode in the *Oedipus at Colonus* (668 ff.):

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. Helmreich, *Der Chor des Sophokles und Euripides nach seinem ἦθος betrachtet*. Erlangen, 1905, p. 78.

Εὐίππου, ξένε τᾶσδε χώρας  
 ἔκου τὰ κράτιστα γὰς ἔπαυλα,  
 τὸν ἀργῆτα Κολωνόν, ἐνθ'  
 ἃ λίγεια μινύρεται  
 θαμίζουσα μάλιστ' ἀηδῶν  
 χλωραῖς ὑπὸ βάσσαις. . . .

Both poets were perfectly conscious of the effect that their notes would have on the Athenians who witnessed their plays. But Euripides as well as Sophocles is a dramatic artist, and it is difficult to assume that he would altogether sacrifice his love of art to court popularity. It is more probable that when he could combine art and national pride he did so most heartily. Can we artistically justify these verses? They are sung in the presence of Medea, who is standing before them in silence, plunged in her dark thoughts of revenge. The wife of Jason had just been assured by the benevolent king of Athens that he would give her a shelter in her exile, and *it is on that assurance that she undertakes to wreak her vengeance*. In her silence, she must be thinking of this land to which she is going, and this must make her consider what she leaves behind. She will have revenged herself on Jason, whom she had once loved. The chorus, in their eagerness to dissuade her from a deed which is to make *her* miserable not less than Jason, do not immediately cross Medea's will, knowing well the impulsiveness and stubbornness of the woman from the region of Phasis. Instead, they exalt the land in which her only hope lies. They sing of the charms of the city of Erchtheus. Above all, they linger on Aphrodite's blessings upon that land. Here, the breathing of the mother of love "is written in fragrance";<sup>1</sup> here, "strong loves" are "enthroned on wisdom." The praise of Athens would brighten Medea's hopes; the notes of love would melt her heart with old memories of the time when she herself had felt this strong love enthroned on wisdom. Under the weight of such reminiscences, her dark thoughts might have paled in the light of tenderer feelings, brighter hopes, wiser thoughts. At that point, when the Corinthian women believe that they have reduced Medea to a logical frame of mind, they think it is time to press their argument. They remind her *that her atrocious deed, if committed, might close even*

<sup>1</sup> From the translation of Gilbert Murray.

*the gates of Athens upon her*, and with that they add their prayers: "How wilt thou dare stand on the shores of the sacred streams? Will the land that protects its friends receive thee, the slayer of thine own children, who art polluted among women? . . . On our knees we fall and unto thee we pray on every side, in every way: slay not, oh, slay not thy children! . . ." In this light it seems very unjust to call the first part of the stasimon irrelevant in any respect.

Others vent their wrath upon *Hercules* and play the part of Eurystheus by subjecting the Dorian hero to posthumous labors. "Why," they ask, "should the old men of Thebes sing of the former deeds of Hercules in the hero's absence and immediately after the cruel tyrant has pronounced his atrocious sentence upon Megara and her children?" But what song would be more appropriate than this eulogy of the very hero who after accomplishing these great deeds and acquiring merited fame is treated so infamously by a petty tyrant when he is no more among the living? That Hercules is dead, every one seems to believe. The old men would gladly fight against the oppressor for the sake of their dead hero, if their weak frames were a match for the tyrant's lances. But since they are too feeble for that, they pour out their commiseration for their friend in a laudatory dirge about him. They are old and simple. Their emotions partake of this simplicity, and, in pathetic helplessness, they sorrow for their sorrowing friends, and add to the hopeless appeals of the children the mournful praises of the lamented champion. They think of him, who, having performed many a glorious deed, has now passed away from life, and sailed down into the world of many tears, where every labor ends. Thence he can return no more to help his own; in vain does his house look for him. . . . Then, turning to their own infirmity, "if the springtime of power were ours" they mourn, "and we could brandish our spears, we and the other mates of the Earth-born, valiantly would we stand before thy children; but now, happy youth has left us far behind. . . ." (348-441).

The next stasimon contains the famous choral ode on old age. It has been often criticized not only as estranged from the plot, but even as nothing less than a *parabasis* in the style of Aristophanes. A critic as careful and erudite as Wilamowitz, whose susceptibility to the charms of classic literature is undoubted, believes that in this song the chorus entirely forget the character of the old Thebans whom they



impersonate, and, as if casting away their masks, they become all of a sudden a chorus of Athenian citizens.<sup>1</sup> Many others detect in the same stanzas the poet himself complaining of his own old age, and comforting himself with the gift of song that is left him. They agree that the verses are entirely foreign to the plot of the drama, and find no justification whatever from the dramatic point of view.

Let us consider the ode more closely. In the moment of highest suspense, when the wife of the absent Hercules, and his children, apparelled in the mournful insignia of death, come forth to meet their fate, and old Amphitryon challenges heaven and Zeus's heedlessness, the hero appears. Returning at last victorious from his expedition, he comes at the very nick of time to bring deliverance to his own. Yet the old men, who had been so anxious about the event before, forget all about it as soon as it has been averted, and deprecating the horrors of old age, they sing of the delights of the gift of song (637 ff.):

Ἄ νεότας μοι φίλον αἰ-  
εῖ· τὸ δὲ γῆρας ἄχθος  
βαρύτερον Αἴτνας σκοπέλων  
ἐπὶ κρατὶ κεῖται, βλεφάρων  
σκοτεινὸν φάος ἐπικαλύψαν . . .  
οὐ παύσομαι τὰς χάριτας  
Μούσαις συγκαταμιγνύς,  
ἀδίσταν συζυγίαν.  
μὴ ζῶην μετ' ἀμουσίας,  
αἰεὶ δ' ἐν στεφάνοισιν εἴ-  
ην· ἔτι τοι γέρων ἄοι-  
δὸς κελαδεῖ Μναμοσύναν·  
ἔτι τὰν Ἡρακλέους  
καλλίνικον αἰδῶ. . .

<sup>1</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Herakles, Commentar*, p. 174 (Berlin, 1889). Especially on verses 672-686, he remarks: "Da ist es der attische Bürgerchor, der am Dionysosfest zum Klange der Music den Reigen tritt." If we compare these words with pp. 363-365 of the chapter on "the *Hercules* of Euripides," we find a certain inconsistency for which I do not know how to account. Thus he affirms in these pages that in the later tragedies, the chorus approaches more and more the Pindaric models in that it becomes the mouthpiece of the poet. He finds an example of this tendency in the *Oedipus at Colonus* (896 ff.), but a greater abundance in Euripides. According to this, for whom does our chorus speak here? For the Athenian people or for the poet? Then is it not true that the Aeschylean choruses stand nearer to the thoughts of the poet than either the Sophoclean or the Euripidean?

Now Euripides may have been old when he wrote these verses, and he may have spoken in them his own feelings, too. We can only welcome this suggestion of the personal element under the impersonal garb of the chorus. But has he here any more than in other odes sacrificed art to his fitful personal feelings? Who are they who voice this intemperate utterance? Are they not weak old men as well? Are they not entitled to feel as Euripides did about old age, and about music, its only consolation? They have been eager to save from Lycus's cruelty the unprotected wife and children of their admired hero. But old age and its cursed weakness have hindered them and forced them to play the part of a grief-wounded spectator in a hideously criminal action. They have felt the shame of it, and already complained of their physical disability. In line three hundred and eleven, they have said to Megara:

“Had any outraged thee while yet mine arms  
Were strong, right quickly had he ceased therefrom;  
But now, I am naught.”<sup>1</sup>

Then Hercules appears, strong in his youth, untouched by the infirmities of age, and able to deliver his own. At the sight of this accomplishment, the old Thebans are touched all the deeper by the thought of their own weakness. Once, they, too, had the youthful vigor of this man. Once, they, too, were able to do deeds, if not Herculean, yet of manly valor. Now who considers them at all? When their manhood is gone, they are forced to see things that they would not abide if they had their youth. They long for the blessings that are gone, and they curse their present infirmities. What could be more human than this?<sup>2</sup> They even complain that the gods have wronged them. Who is the sufferer who does not blame higher powers personate or impersonate for his sufferings? Yet, suddenly, a ray of comfort lights upon them. With all their burden, the art of song is still with them. In minstrelsy, they may still sing of the blessings of youth, and

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Way's translation.

<sup>2</sup> I do not understand Decharme, when he remarks: “Quant au second stasimon, il se justifie mal. Un mot suffit à lui donner naissance. Hercule vient de dire que tout père aime naturellement ses enfants; et le chœur de s'emparer aussitôt de cette réflexion banale pour vanter la jeunesse, en lui opposant la violence avec son cortège de misères. . . .” Paul Decharme, *Euripide et l'esprit de son théâtre*, Paris, 1893, p. 454.

raise their voices in praise of him who is now what they have been in youth, but nobler in race and nobler in deed, Hercules, the son of Zeus, who, avenging the sufferings of his own, avenges also the insults made upon their own age. Reading the stasimon in this light, we can find the action of the play imaged with a master's art throughout. Perhaps it requires a certain amount of subtleness, but is it not true that Euripides is the most subtle of the ancient dramatists?

Haigh cannot account for the odes which the Phoenician women sing after the departure of Polynices and after the revelation of the plan for self-sacrifice made by Menoeceus. "Odes of this kind," he observes, "have no real bearing upon the action, and for all practical purposes may be regarded as interludes."<sup>1</sup> In the first of these "interludes,"<sup>2</sup> the women from across the sea recall the adventures of Cadmus, his struggle with the dragon, the strange seed that produced the earth-born, and the blood which stained the city of Thebes in her birth. Then the women call upon their common ancestor Epaphus, child of Io beloved of Zeus, to aid the city of their relatives in its great danger. Is this an interlude? Undoubtedly, the choral is eminently retrospective. But is it not natural for the women who have come to Thebes from a distant land to bear more vividly in their minds the stories on which they base their relations to the city they now visit? Why should we think this more of an interlude than the song of the daughters of Danaus in the *Supplices* of Aeschylus,<sup>3</sup> in which forty-eight verses are given to the account of Io's wanderings, and only a few lines at the beginning and the end remind us that it is a prayer to Zeus to save the persecuted maidens from defilement? Or is the reflectiveness of the Phoenician women less related to the story of Cadmus than the fortunes of the Danaïdes to the story of Io? But Cadmus was the founder of Thebes. This Cadmus came from the country of these

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Haigh, *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, Oxford, 1896, p. 253. Not more sparing is the scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 443: Τοὺς δ' αὖ χορευτὰς ἡλιθίους παρεστάναι. Καὶ διὰ τούτων τὸν Εὐριπίδην διασύρει. Οὗτος γὰρ εἰσάγει τοὺς χοροὺς οὔτε τὰ ἀκόλουθα φθεγγόμενους τῇ ὑποθέσει, ἀλλ' ἱστορίας τινὰς ἀπαγγέλλοντας ὡς ἐν ταῖς Φοινίσσαις, οὔτε ἐμπαθῶς ἀντιλαμβάνομένους τῶν ἀδικηθέντων ἀλλὰ μεταφύ ἀντιπίπτοντας.

<sup>2</sup> *Phoen.* 638-690.

<sup>3</sup> Aesch. *Suppl.* 538-590.

women. The killing of the dragon was the original sin, the source of all woes for Thebes. Is it irrelevant for the chorus to think of the beginning of evils on the verge of a new and terrible misfortune which will be nothing but a new link to the old chain? Besides, does not this reminiscence of Cadmus broaden the atmosphere of the play, or enlarge the scope of the action? Is it to be condemned any more than the account of the fortunes of the various Greeks at Troy, given by Neoptolemus to Philoctetes? Must we accuse Sophocles, too, for acting irrelevantly? <sup>1</sup> Have not both tragedians sought the same goal by the same method? What if the one uses the actor as his medium, and the other the chorus?

The second of the so-called *ἐμβόλιμα* of the same tragedy follows Menoeceus' resolution to die for his native city. This is a noble deed. The chorus feel its nobleness and ponder upon it. But what they sing so disgusts the scholiast that he exclaims with impatience: <sup>2</sup> "These are utterly unaccountable; they should either express their sympathy for the death of Menoeceus or commend the valor of the young man. Instead they tell the worn-out story of Oedipus and the Sphinx." Indeed, Euripides would have followed this advice if he were a scholiast. It is good, however, that he is a faulty poet rather than a virtuous commentator. He thought somewhat differently of his song. While Menoeceus speaks, the Phoenician Women have already begun to meditate, and, when he is gone, they express their thoughts from the point they have reached. The race of Cadmus is not wanting in nobleness. The solution of the riddle of the Sphinx was a deed, the fame of which had reached throughout the world. It had come across the sea to their own land. That deed, also, was meant to save Thebes from the evils which the terrible monster had brought upon her. Yet what was the result of its nobleness? Had it not brought worse calamities? Now Menoeceus has gone to perform another deed as noble as the old one. What will be the end of it? Redemption or a greater calamity? Yet its nobleness carries away the Phoenician women, and praising the young prince's love of his country, they wish that they themselves had such children. To call this ode "an interlude having no real bearing upon the action," requires a reader whose mind is closed to the import of the tragedy, and who cannot understand the value of the

<sup>1</sup> Soph. *Philoct.* 329, 412 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Schol. to Eurip. *Phoen.* 1018 ff.

tragic irony concealed under the restrained utterances of the chorus. Such criticisms are indeed irritating. The very fact that the chorus consists of women from the country of which Thebes is a colony does by no means belittle the importance of the chorus, but widens and deepens its meaning, and wins a greater admiration for Euripides, who, instead of imitating Aeschylus by forming his chorus of Theban women, has struck a new channel, and put the wider saga of Thebes into the graceful creations of a group of journeying foreign women.

What shall we say of the stasima of the *Iphigenia at Aulis*, the play which above all other plays has been exposed to the war cry, "decadence!"? The long parodos (164-302), a reminder of Aeschylean eloquence, although atrociously mutilated by hair-splitting critics, is a beautiful descriptive choral furnishing the spectator with what the poet cannot possibly accomplish within the narrow limits of stage and plot, i. e., with a bird's eye view of the whole camp of the Greeks and of the most imposing figures of their army. As a matter of fact, the women of Chalcis represent the eye of Greece beholding with delight her flower and pride. But critics say: before their very eyes happens the quarrel between Agamemnon and Menelaus which reveals to them the plot used for alluring Iphigenia and Clytaemnestra to the camp, and yet, they seem entirely unconcerned with this stirring revelation. Instead, they sing in their following stasimon of evil love and its bitter fruit. They are transported by their vision of Paris, and have no word or thought for the unfortunate victim until the very chariot carrying her comes before them. I think, however, that they are most deeply concerned with what they have been listening to. I repeat that they represent Greece looking upon the great armament and anxiously anticipating the exaction of her rights. With the women of Chalcis, the great issue is not the sacrifice of Iphigenia, but the outcome of the great campaign which is to avenge the insult upon Grecian womanhood. When the agreement between the two brothers is reached, they have no thoughts for the allured victim, but for the prospect that divine help will be at last secured, and the great fleet will soon plough the Aegean Sea, sailing as a black avenger against the city of Troy. The bloody conflict, foreshadowed in their thoughts, reminds them of the origin of the evil, the impious love of Paris: (543 ff.)

Μάκαρες οἱ μετρίας θεοῦ  
 μετά τε σωφροσύνας μετέ-  
 σχον λέκτρων Ἀφροδίτας,  
 γαλανεῖα χρησάμενοι  
 μαριάδων οἴστρων . . .  
 εἶη δέ μοι μετρία μὲν  
 χάρις, πόθοι δ' ὅσιοι . . .  
 Ἑμολες, ὦ Πάρις, ἧ τε σύγει  
 βουκόλος ἀργενναῖς ἐτράφης  
 Ἰδαίαις παρὰ μόσχους  
 βάμβακα συρίζων . . .  
 ὅτε σε κρίσις ἔμηνε θεῶν,  
 ἃ σ' Ἑλλάδα πέμπει . . .  
 ὄθεν ἔρις ἔρην  
 Ἑλλάδα σὺν δορὶ νανσί τ' ἄγει  
 Τροίας πέργαμα. . .

It is evident that they favor the plan of the sacrifice in spite of their pity for the victim. When the chariot appears with Clytaemnestra and Iphigenia, they welcome them with joy and blessings thus endeavoring to dispel every suspicion of the plot under the sounds of good omen. To those who would demand a more open expression of their inner thoughts, I should answer that such a course on the part of those who have come to the camp as mere spectators would be a rather unpardonable insolence. They are only women and unrelated to the actors, a mere populace, who, like the people of the Homeric age, may assent or acclaim, but have no part in the forming and discussion of the various plans, the exclusive prerogative of the chiefs.

The above instances are some of the examples which offend many a critic's taste for choral expression. They all belong to the kind which Gilbert Murray calls "the normal chorus" to differentiate it from the "congruous chorus," whose world is blended with the world of the individuals, and from the "incongruous chorus," whose world deliberately clashes with that of the individuals.<sup>1</sup> In this normal use, he

<sup>1</sup> This and the following account of Gilbert Murray's views with the passages from his translation are quoted mainly from the account of his lecture in Boston given by the *Boston Evening Transcript* of April 2, 1912. Cf. the same author's account of the Euripidean chorus in *Euripides and his Age*, New York, 1913, pp. 226-243.

believes, the ideal world, represented by the chorus, is used to heal the wounds of the real and to translate horror into beauty. Iphigenia, for example, escaping with her brother, leaves behind her the chorus who had helped them to escape. From the place where they are deserted, they see a bird which wings by, bound across the water to Greece. They follow it with their eyes while they sing: (1089ff.)

Bird of the sea rocks, of the bursting spray,  
 O halcyon bird,  
 That wheelest crying, crying on thy way;  
 Who knoweth grief can read the tale of thee:  
 One love long lost, one song forever heard,  
 And wings that sweep the sea.  
 Sister, I too beside the sea complain,  
 A bird that hath no wing,  
 Oh, for a kind Greek market-place again,  
 For Artemis that healeth woman's pain;  
 Here I stand hungering.  
 Give me the little hill above the sea,  
 The palm of Delos fringed delicately,  
 The young sweet laurel and the olive tree  
 Gray-leaved and glimmering. . . .

In the *Hippolytus*, Gilbert Murray selects a simpler example. When Phaedra, wounded with mortification and shame, and embittered by a fitful hatred, goes off to take her life and to leave behind her the dark plan of her revenge, the chorus, weary of the heavy atmosphere of shame and crime, express the wish to be taken away from it: (732ff.)

Could I take me to some cavern for mine hiding,  
 In the hill-tops where the Sun scarce hath trod;  
 Or a cloud make the home of mine abiding,  
 As a bird among the bird-droves of God!  
 Could I wing me to my rest amid the roar  
 Where the waters of Eridanus are clear,  
 And Phaethon's sad sisters by his grave  
 Weep into the river, and each tear  
 Gleams, a drop of amber, in the wave. . . .

"Now some people," Gilbert Murray observes, "call these choruses unreal and irrelevant. Doubtless, if they were what these critics call relevant, they would say something about how sad it is when

young girls let their emotions get the better of them. Instead, the chorus somehow catches a higher relevancy, a greater beauty out of sorrow. It is like the memory. It gives a strange mellowness and mystery to what has happened, like Tennyson's beautiful lyric:

Break, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

Everything seems so much more beautiful. 'This is the reason why the past has such magical power,' says Bertram Russell. 'The past does not change or strive. Like Duncan, after life's fitful fever, it sleeps well. What was eager and grasping, what was petty and transitory, has faded away; and the things that were beautiful and eternal shine out of it like stars in the night'."

Thus far our examples have been selected from those which are generally black-listed under the title "irrelevant." Yet there is another class of chorals in the Euripidean plays which for most of the accusers do not seem to exist at all. They, also, like Duncan, sleep well. For if they were spoken of, they would throw blemish on the much cherished theory that Euripides has played "hide and seek" with his choruses, and made them irreconcilable to the plot. The choral odes of the *Bacchantes*, and of the *Suppliants* are so prominent in this class, that they have not been overlooked even by the most enthusiastic upholders of the theory. But little consideration is taken of such plays as the *Heracleidae*, the *Cyclops*, the *Ion*, the *Trojan Women*, the *Orestes*. Certainly no choral ode in the mentioned plays may be taken for a mere interlude, unless it be the anxious song which the Trojan Women sing after the departure of Talthybius with the child. Enwrapped in their cloud of woe, they have no tears for the son of Hector, who is taken away to die, but ponder on their own dark past. The gods are cruel to Troy. The walls which Phoebus had built fell in the old times before the force of Hercules, and, rebuilt, they lie again in ruins! It is in vain that a youth of the royal house of Troy with his delicate beauty fills the cup for the lips of the highest god. Aye, even the land that has given him birth, his mother, is now wasting in flames, while her cry of woe rises in vain like unto the cry of a mother-bird for her burning young. . . . This ode (799) forms a pathetic utterance of the Trojan Women standing not far from the smoking ruins of their



city and just about to cross the Aegean Sea to a land of bondage. But, appropriate though it is, it fits less into the context of the tragedy than any other ode of the plays enumerated.

In the *Heraclidae*, the stasima are not only concerned entirely with the plot, but have not even the natural reflectiveness of old age which we meet in choruses of old men. After the departure of the insolent herald, although a scene of reaction takes place between Iolaus and Demophon, in which the old men have their share, when they come to sing their stasimon, they are still under the indignation aroused in them by the insolence of Copeus, and even continue to menace the enemy in his absence (353-380). Their next stasimon does not differ from a speech of consolation addressed to Iolaus, who sinks to the ground at Macaria's noble resolution to sacrifice herself for the salvation of the others, and, except for the fact that it is in lyric metres and is accompanied with *emmeleia*, it makes not the slightest pause in the action. "It is the gods who give us joy and woe; it is vain to toil against them. Cast thee not down but endure what comes from the gods. . . . Her portion is undying fame for the generations to come as a reward for her noble deed. . . ." When Iolaus leaves the stage in order to join the battle, the chorus, anxious for the outcome, call upon divine help in a prayer which is not less warm and vivid than the prayer of the Theban women in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*. Nor is their joyful outburst at the news of victory less proper for the occasion (763, 891 ff.).

In the *Cyclops*, the chorus consists of Satyrs, who, having been cast on the shores of Sicily, the island inhabited by one-eyed monsters, are forced to serve Polyphemus, the hideous hero of the play. In their bondage, they do not forget their nature, and they are full of jest in the most critical moments. They enter the stage driving in a flock of insubordinate goats and sheep, which with great difficulty they manage to push into the cave. As soon as they have done their task, they call on their absent joys, the Wine-god and the dancing Nymphs and the pleasures of love. Then Odysseus, stranded on the island by the same fate, breaks upon their monotony with the divine liquid. But Cyclops arrives on the spot and announces his monstrous plan of feasting on human flesh. The Satyrs' song is an address to Cyclops on his impious feast. When Odysseus expounds to them his plot and pledges

their assistance, they precipitously accept the proposition, and humor their hateful master as he comes forward steeped with wine. Then Cyclops drags reeling Silenus into the cave, and falls asleep. Odysseus prepares the fire brand, and the chorus, left alone, indulge in the hope of success. Their words, however, are not "practicable." Thus when the moment of action arrives, they shrink away in consternation, and only enjoy the results of Odysseus' revenge. The choral parts of the work, which until recently has been the only representative of the ancient Satyr Play, are so closely connected with the plot that we almost lose the chorus in the actor. The odes corresponding to the stasima of the tragedy are very short, and have wholly the power of speeches. Certainly, without this chorus, the *Cyclops* would very likely be a tragedy rather than a Satyr Play. Most of the comedy is furnished by the Satyrs, and, although they do not seem to take an effective part in the plot, they are of the utmost importance in accomplishing the ultimate purpose of a Satyr Play, i. e., in effecting the comic relief necessary after the emotional strain of the tragedies that had preceded it.

It would be wearisome to consider separately each stasimon of the plays we have mentioned. A rapid glance at Euripides himself would give a better impression of my assertions than my limited argument. I must, however, lay stress upon the fact that choral odes which are unquestionably parts of the plot and indispensable to the tragedies, are no fitful exceptions with Euripides, but are quite the rule. Because we have in Euripides a greater variety of choruses and a greater multiplicity of relations between chorus and actor, we cannot prove that the poet has detached the odes from the plots. In this respect, our poet has not brought decadence to the tragic chorus.

#### 4. THE THEORY OF GRADUAL DECLINE

It remains now to consider the assertion which certain critics make that the importance of the chorus in Euripides follows a gradual decline, which may be traced chronologically. "If we compare his later plays with those of earlier date," says Haigh,<sup>1</sup> "there is a manifest

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Haigh, *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, Oxford, 1896. In very similar words speaks Otto Gallus, *Über die Bedeutung des Chors in der griechischen Tragödie*, Landskron, 1895, p. 61.

tendency to thrust the chorus more and more into the background. Its connexion with the story begins to be less intimate, its interest in the characters less keen and personal, than in former times; and it is evidently on the way towards assuming those insignificant functions, to which it was finally reduced." The distinguished scholar corroborates this statement by pointing to the contents of the choral odes. "In the earlier dramas of Euripides, the chorus still play as in Sophocles the part of interested and sympathetic witnesses. Their attention is absorbed by the incidents upon the stage; and the odes which they interpose between the intervals of the action consist either of fervent expressions of sympathy and concern or of reflexions upon the events which have just occurred. . . . But in the majority of the later tragedies . . . the chorus no longer appear to be deeply affected by the varying fortunes of the drama. Their attitude is less sympathetic; and instead of expressions of emotion or pensive meditations, they occupy the pauses of the play with long and ornate descriptions of some legendary event, taken from the family history of the leading characters." A further symptom of the decline, Haigh finds in the style and language of the choral odes. "The earlier lyrics of Euripides, are masterpieces of graceful beauty and imaginative power; but in those which belong to his later period the execution, on the whole, is far less perfect. In spite of numerous brilliant exceptions, there is a general tendency, in these later compositions, to subordinate sense to sound, and to think more of the music than of the language. The meaning is occasionally almost lost in a labyrinth of words, which recalls the inanities of the Italian Opera. The sentences are spun out to enormous length with strings of appositional clauses hung together; and the mind is floated along from phrase to phrase, from picture to picture, through a long series of bewildering images, with only a very dim conception of the general purpose of the whole. . . ."

How far is this criticism true? Even the critic whom we have just quoted finds there are some exceptions, which he recognizes as "numerous and brilliant," and admits that in some of the late plays, as in the *Bacchantes* and in the *Suppliants*, Euripides restores the chorus "to much of its original grandeur and significance." But are not the exceptions sufficient to prove the rule? Although we do not know the exact time of the composition of each Euripidean play, we are fairly sure

of at least nine plays: the *Alcestis*, the *Medea*, the *Hippolytus*, the *Troades*, the *Electra*, the *Helena*, the *Orestes*, the *Bacchantes*, and the *Iphigenia at Aulis*. About the others opinions vary. But to most scholars the dates given in the introduction of M. L. Earle's edition of the *Medea*<sup>1</sup> seem to be nearest to truth:

| Title of Drama             |            | B.C.       |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|
| Cyclops . . . . .          | possibly   | 441        |
| Alcestis . . . . .         |            | 438        |
| Medea . . . . .            |            | 431        |
| Heraclidae . . . . .       | probably   | 430        |
| Andromache . . . . .       | perhaps    | 430        |
| Hippolytus . . . . .       |            | 428        |
| Hecuba . . . . .           | apparently | 425 or 424 |
| Supplices . . . . .        | about      | 421        |
| Hercules . . . . .         | "          | 421        |
| Troades . . . . .          |            | 415        |
| Tauric Iphigenia . . . . . | apparently | 414 or 413 |
| Electra . . . . .          |            | 413        |
| Helena . . . . .           |            | 412        |
| Ion . . . . .              | perhaps    | 412        |
| Phoenissae . . . . .       |            | 411-408    |
| Orestes . . . . .          |            | 408        |
| Bacchae . . . . .          | apparently | 407        |
| Aulid Iphigenia . . . . .  |            | 407        |

Those plays of Euripides which have come down to us cover a literary activity of about thirty-five years. If we divide these years into three periods of eleven to twelve years each, we find that in the earliest period, side by side with such plays as the *Cyclops*, the *Alcestis*, and the *Heraclidae*, we must count the *Medea*, which presents a chorus of considerably weaker connection with the play, and even the *Andromache*, the chorus of which is undoubtedly not less distant from the plot than that of the *Aulid Iphigenia*. On the other hand, in the last period, against the *Aulid Iphigenia*, the *Phoenissae*, and even the *Electra*, which Haigh and even Decharme might characterize as decadent, we can array not only plays like the *Troades*, and the *Tauric Iphigenia*, but the four plays in which the chorus is of pronounced freshness, beauty, vigor, and importance, i. e., *Helena*, *Ion*, *Orestes*, and the

<sup>1</sup> M. L. Earle, *Medea*, p. 28. Cf. Grace Harriet Macurdy, *The Chronology of the Extant Plays of Euripides*, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1905. Both exclude the *Rhesus* as non-Euripidean.

unparalleled *Bacchae*. Indeed, with the single exception of the ode which the chorus in the *Helena* sing after Menelaus enters the palace with Helena,<sup>1</sup> what fault is there to be found or what sign of decadence to be detected in any of these choruses?

Finally, in the middle period, we find no chorus to which we may apply Haigh's characteristics. If, however, we consider *Hippolytus* and *Hercules* as belonging to the decadent class in spite of the brilliant choral pearls which they include, let us remember that the *Hippolytus* is the earliest of this period, and that the *Hercules* falls in the same time with the *Supplices*, a tragedy in which the chorus is the chief actor, achieving an importance comparable to that of the chorus in the *Eumenides*, and by far superior to any chorus that we have in Sophocles. Hence, according to our comparisons, we should be more justified, if we asserted that the Euripidean choruses increase in importance with the age of the poet than if we believe with Haigh in a gradual decadence.

As to the other assertion that the later lyrics are, on the whole, far less perfect than the earlier ones, and that they are given more to sound than to sense and poetic beauty, I do not think it merits a lengthy refutation. What late plays Haigh had in mind when he wrote this, I cannot imagine. For even if we except the much-abused play of the *Aulid Iphigenia*, what better lyrics has Euripides written than those of the *Electra*, the *Helena*, the *Phoenissae*, and, above all, of the *Bacchantes*?

As we have already observed, we cannot prove the genius of Euripides declining with the years either in the other parts of his dramatic

<sup>1</sup> *Hel.* 1301-1369. Decharme, generally more lenient than others, pronounces this choral as the only one in the whole range of extant Greek Tragedy which may be denoted with the name of embolimon. (*Euripide et l'esprit de son théâtre*, p. 462.) It certainly has more than any other choral ode the characteristics of an embolimon. Yet, in vv. 1353-1369, certain reason is given by the chorus which deserves a careful consideration. For if Gilbert Murray's plausible theory, as explained in the fourth chapter of Harrison's *Themis*, is true, we must recognize in this stasimon the signs of some old religious tradition or rite by which the cult of Demeter is connected with the cult of Helena. (Jane Ellen Harrison, *Themis, a study of the social origins of Greek Religion; with an excursus on the ritual forms preserved in Greek Tragedy*, by Gilbert Murray; and a chapter on the origin of the Olympic Games by F. M. Cornford. Cambridge, University Press, 1912.)

art or in his tragic choral creations; and we must not find signs of decadence in his greater variety which may otherwise be accounted for by the greater number of works that have come down to us. We must remember that Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides are by no means the only tragedians of their own times, but that they are the only ones whose greatness has successfully struggled against the rolling years. Neither in other respects nor in the treatment of the chorus, can we think of them as standing higher or lower on the decline. Aristotle explicitly tells us that it was Agathon who in his tragedies first used interludes, or embolima, which had nothing to do with the plot, and that it was neither Sophocles nor Euripides but the unknown *others* who followed or surpassed him. In Euripides we should rather find a poet who struggled against the wave of decadence and successfully endeavored to preserve for the tragic chorus a position of freshness and interest. He is no nearer to decadence than Aeschylus; and for his creativeness and inventiveness in his successful manipulation of the myths treated by all his predecessors without incurring once the charge of imitation, he must be considered one who perfected rather than as one who degraded the Athenian Drama.

## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EURIPIDEAN CHORUS

Thus far we have defended Euripides against such faults as are generally found with his chorus. We have discussed the comparative length of his choruses, their importance in the dialogue, and the consistency of their lyric parts. But we have not explained the points of difference between the Euripidean and the Sophoclean or Aeschylean treatment of the chorus, and, therefore, not yet detected the actual characteristics of the chorus in Euripides. Although our poet has by no means minimized the rôle of the chorus, it is impossible to imagine that he has introduced no change whatever in his treatment, and that he simply followed the path of his predecessors. Dealing with the same legends with which Aeschylus, Sophocles, and other contemporaries of these great poets had dealt, Euripides would find it difficult to satisfy his hunger for the fresh and the new by limiting himself to the old methods. The reader of Euripides' plays realizes this truth. Whether he studies a chorus which is inseparably connected with the plot, or a chorus which, according to his conceptions, is more or less

irrelevant, he is sure to feel the Euripidean touch. He feels that what he reads could not have been written either by Aeschylus or by Sophocles, but by another poet, less grandiloquent than the first, less serene than the second, but more fanciful, more subtle, more individualistic. What are the sources of this difference ?

#### 5. RELIGION IN THE CHORUS OF EURIPIDES

Let us first consider how far the chorus of Euripides is connected with what is the main source of the Greek Drama, i. e., religion. "The roots of the chorus," says Gilbert Murray, "are deep down in human nature, as deep as the springs of religious emotion. The *choros* of tragedy was a special kind of dance. It was a dance connected with the worship of heroes and the mighty dead, particularly the sort of hero that was expected to return, perhaps in his own person, perhaps in a re-birth. It is a sort of religion that has encircled the world."<sup>1</sup>

With Aeschylus, the chorus is so steeped in religion that it often becomes a mere exponent of religious and ethical doctrines, or a participant and performer of religious rites. In the pouring of libations, in the invocation of the dead, in the prayers to the various divinities, the chorus take the leading part. Their presence has a deep motive never entirely estranged from a religious nature. The tender daughters of Oceanus come as sympathizers with the suffering Titan, and are deeply interested in the struggle of his unbending will and the supreme will of Zeus. In the *Suppliant Maidens*, the Danaides come to the land which nourished Io in order to take shelter under the protection of Zeus, and it is reverence for the gods which forms their chief reason for urging the Argives to help them. In the *Agamemnon*, the old men from the beginning to the end battle with the gods. In the *Eumenides*, the chorus consists of Furies who, in turn, have to struggle against more benevolent deities. All the choral parts are saturated with religious rites, thoughts, legends, problems. They are full of earnest prayers. In this way, the Aeschylean choruses are nearest to the primitive chorus; but elevated by Aeschylus' zealous endeavors, they accomplish the poet's higher aim of rousing religious emotion and, above all, imposing upon the audience a nobler religion centering in a nobler pantheon.

<sup>1</sup> *Boston Transcript*, April 2, 1912.

Sophocles, on the other hand, uses religion not for theological but for artistic purposes. Of course, he is not wanting in piety and reverence for the gods. But he belongs to a younger generation than that of Aeschylus, and he has grown with men who, though they clung to the old rites with mystic devotion, did not make religion the object of constant ardor as did Aeschylus. Sophocles loves the Athenian people and wishes to be loved by them. He, therefore, learns to love the religion of the people not so much because he believes it to be true — he does not seem to have an opinion of his own on the matter — but because it is the religion of the glorious state of Athens, and partakes of its resplendent beauty and of its magnificent dignity. Consequently, the Sophoclean choruses do not speak of religion with the divine inspiration of a prophet, but sing with the mystic emotion of a devoted priest. They look upon the gods with the reverence with which we look upon noble forms sculptured in marble. Their religion does not go further than the religion of the best class of the Athenian citizens. Without trying to improve upon these gods, they surround them with an idealizing halo which delights the Athenians because it is in perfect accordance with the tendency of their own minds. In the religious utterances of the Sophoclean chorus, the Athenians recognized with simple delight their own thoughts clad in the mellowing words of Sophoclean sweetness. When in the course of his tragedy, Sophocles sees that the audience would fall into a religious or moralizing mood, he makes his chorus experience the same feeling and express that feeling in modulated tones. Thus the Sophoclean choreutae become not only the friends of the hero or heroine, but the friends of the audience, and tend to become the ideal spectators of the tragedy, a quality which many critics apply indiscriminately to the choruses of all our tragedians.

What is true of the religion is also true of the morality of the chorus. It is, however, most difficult to disentangle religious from moral elements in the ancient drama. In this respect, the poet's genius made a great advance upon the primitive chorus by working an ethical tone into it, and by moulding its frantic expressions of religious exuberance into a unifying morality. Aeschylus walked this new path gloriously. His morality as well as his religion is overladen with the fiery enthusiasm and sweeping earnestness of the prophet. With his lessons, he



carries his audience away with an overwhelming power. In him we see the poet of the giants of Marathon and of Salamis, on whom he could work with the might of a mighty leader. But Sophocles replaced might with art. He looked upon his work with the eye of a sculptor, and, where he thought fit, he struck with his masterly chisel. Unlike Aeschylus, who forces his audience to listen to his lessons, Sophocles notes with a serene observer's eye the mood in which his audience is, and gently works with this mood toward a beautiful goal. Thus in the *Oedipus Rex*, when Iocasta's scorn at the divine oracles strikes the audience with restlessness, Sophocles immediately takes up the emotion, and, through his chorus, he expresses what the delighted Athenians recognized as their own feelings, mantled in far more beautiful words and sounds than they ever could utter (863 ff.). The Sophoclean moral lessons are not deep, but within reach of the plainest mind, and, therefore, all the more effective. Not without truth, Dio Chrysostom remarks that the beauty of the Sophoclean songs justifies the words of Aristophanes: <sup>1</sup>

ὁ δ' αὖ Σοφοκλέους τοῦ μέλιτος κεχριμένου  
ὥσπερ καδίσκου περιέλειχε τὸ στόμα

The earnest admirers of Emerson whom I have met have emphasized to me this very Sophoclean quality of the American thinker and poet, his power to express in harmonious and moving words truths which they vaguely felt before. Might not the charm that Emerson exercises upon the minds of most Americans be used as an illustration of the charm which such a universal and yet essentially Athenian master exerted upon his fellow-citizens in his day ?

But what is the way in which the chorus of Euripides perform their religious and ethical function ? Euripides was a man who lived in doubt. If we may liken ancient with modern times, Aeschylus would in this respect be compared with Milton; Sophocles, with Tennyson; Euripides, with Matthew Arnold. Aeschylus and Milton had implicit faith in the divine agencies, good or evil. What they say about religion is, at the same time, their own sincere and unshakable belief. With both, the gods live and exercise their power whether they are Furies or devils, Jupiter or Jehovah, Apollo or Gabriel. In both, we find a

<sup>1</sup> Dio Chrysost. λόγ. 52. Cf. Aristoph. *Edil. Oxon.* fr. 581.

titanic conflict with regard to supreme authority, and in both the highest and best prove victorious over the inferior and worse agencies. Just as Jehovah triumphs over Satan, Jupiter wins the victory over the Titans. Sophocles and Tennyson accepted religion but avoided discussing it; or, if they ever came to doubts, their manner was calm, their attitude pious. This is clearly illustrated by the *Oedipus King* of the one and by the *In Memoriam* of the other. Likewise do we see the chorus of the Theban citizens of the *Antigone* acting and expressing themselves, after Antigone's farewell to life, with that stoical tranquility with which King Arthur sees inside the dark walls of the nunnery his beloved queen prostrated, with tears of penitent sorrow before him.<sup>1</sup> Euripides and Matthew Arnold would have gladly lived under the spell of religion if only they could. But their earnest thoughts and truth-seeking meditations come into inevitable conflict with popular religious tradition. Their doubts find a fertile ground to grow, and soon both poets feel that the walls which protected their faith are torn down. They are driven by storms hither and thither, unreconcilable with the past, uncertain of the present, excluded from the future. Under such circumstances, Euripides could not give his chorus either the constructive religiousness of Aeschylus or the pious conservatism of Sophocles. His earnestness was Aeschylean, but the doubt was his own. He felt in himself a constant battle going on which he should express in his work. This he does with the utmost earnestness and seriousness, never lightly or jestingly as we are misled to believe by the original and ingenious but altogether unsound criticisms of Verrall and his school.<sup>2</sup> Nearer to truth is Nestle<sup>3</sup> when he points out that those who think of Euripides as an atheist are unjust to our poet. If he had thought of the gods as Diagoras did,<sup>4</sup> we could not explain his theory of the universe. Indeed, Euripides detached himself from the traditional religion with earnest and sincere regret. Often we see him full of long-

<sup>1</sup> Soph. *Antig.* 944 ff.; Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, *Guinevere*.

<sup>2</sup> A. W. Verrall, *Euripides, the Rationalist*, Cambridge, 1895; *Essays on Four Plays of Euripides*, Cambridge, 1905. Cf. Gilbert Norwood, *The Riddle of the Bacchae*, Manchester, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> Wilhelm Nestle, *Euripides, der Dichter der griechischen Aufklärung*, Stuttgart, 1901, chap. III, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Aristoph. *Av.* 1072; *Nub.* 830; Diodor. 13, 6; Suidas and Hesychius under the word *Diagoras*.

ing for the lost faith and turning with eager soul to the pleasant and happy gods of Olympus. This longing is expressed by the words of the chorus in the *Hippolytus*:<sup>1</sup>

Ἦ μέγα μοι τὰ θεῶν μελεδήμαθ', ὅταν φρένας ἔλθῃ,  
 λύπας παραιρεῖ· ξύνεσιν δέ τιν' ἐλπίδι κείθων  
 λείπομαι ἔν τε τύχαις θνατῶν καὶ ἐν ἔργμασι λεύσσω·  
 ἄλλα γὰρ ἄλλοθεν ἀμείβεται, μετὰ δ' ἴσταται ἀνδράσιν αἰὼν  
 πολυπλάνητος αἰεί. . . .

This is one of the few instances in which we may suspect the chorus of speaking the sentiments of the poet with regard to religion. As a rule, the Euripidean choruses are far from expressing the poet's battling thoughts. They are the representative of the people, a plurality which Euripides not less than Socrates and Anaxagoras considered incapable of deep thought. Aeschylus, who believed in the thoughts and actions of the πολλοὶ whom he had seen in Marathon and Salamis, made his chorus, and, therefore, the people, the chief exponent of his religious conceptions. Euripides, who had seen the crowds going mad for a Cleon or Hyperbolus, had little respect for the people that had lost their ancient intelligence and virtue and blindly followed every crafty demagogue. He certainly thought them incapable of philosophic contemplation. His own thoughts he confides to a chosen few. The deep problems which burdened his mind, whether religious or moral, he expounded through the mouths of a few individuals rather than through those of his choruses. Religion for Euripides needed argument; the chorus could only listen to, but hardly mingle with a discussion. Hence the chorus could not be the religious exponent of Euripides as it had been of Aeschylus.

Are we then to understand that there are no religious touches to be found in the Euripidean chorus? This would be impossible. On the contrary, the religious touches are frequent and effective. But in most cases, they represent the thoughts of the chorus, and, therefore, of the people as Euripides conceived of them. Often the chorus lift their voices to a prayer. Thus the old Athenians, who are left alone on the stage in the *Heraclidae*, while beyond the walls of the city the battle rages that is to decide their own fortune and that of the children of

<sup>1</sup> Eurip. *Hippol.* 1104 ff.

Hercules, pray earnestly to Athena and Zeus to give victory to the champions of the weak. The friends of Electra in the *Orestes* pray to the implacable Furies to cease from pursuing the house of Tantalus. But such prayers might be addressed to the gods by any men of the people in time of similar distress, although they would not be able to reach the heights of our poet's lyric power. Nor do we find in them the ponderous fullness of Aeschylus or the mystic serenity of Sophocles. Their words grow out of their crying need not out of their constant faith. It is their passion not their reason that speaks.

Occasionally, they even seem to be interested in a religious thought. But we must not attribute such reasoning to Euripides' own mind or faith. Thus in the *Hercules*, the old Thebans, stirred by the consciousness of their weakness, pour their curses on old age, and, in truly human fashion, they throw the blame on some one else, in this case, on the gods: (655 ff.)

εἰ δὲ θεοῖς ἦν ξύνεσις  
καὶ σοφία κατ' ἀνδρας,  
δίδυμον ἂν ἦβαν ἔφερον  
φανερὸν χαρακτῆρ' ἀρετᾶς  
ᾧσοισιν μέτα. . . .

Euripides makes the old men sing these words in earnest, because their character is in harmony with the thought expressed. But it would be incredible to think of Euripides as sharing the old Thebans' view about life. What contributes to the progress of the play does not issue from the inner meditations of the poet. Let us not forget that what is fit for the old men of the chorus, who in their physical and intellectual infirmity are incapable of far-reaching thoughts, would be certainly preposterous if it came from Euripides himself, the serious thinker and the friend of the great philosophers of his age. The chorus itself is the *vulgus profanum*, which, in spite of its simple sincerity and its desire to explain what seems puzzling, cannot enter the meshes of intricate philosophical thought without stumbling into a chaos of inconsistencies. It dares think, to be sure, but it cannot go beyond the thought of a populace, which it clothes in words of Euripidean lyricism stirring our minds and arousing our emotions because of the naturalness with which they express the affections of the men or women composing the chorus. This intermingling of popular thought and

Euripidean lyricism makes it all the more difficult to disentangle the poet's subjectiveness from his objective creations, and explains to a large measure the confusion of the critics.

Thus Decharme<sup>1</sup> discovers Euripides in the doubts of the Chalcidian women about the divine origin of Helena. The simple women, with the sorrows and evils that the gathered host is to suffer and to inflict foreshadowed in their vision, cannot make up their minds whether Helena was daughter of Leda and of Zeus in his swan-like disguise, or whether mortal bards have invented the story:<sup>2</sup>

εἰ δὴ φάτις ἔτυμος ὧς  
 ἔτυχεν, ὄρνιθι παμμένῳ  
 Διὸς ὅτ' ἡλλάχθη δέμας, εἴτ'  
 ἐν δέλτοις Πιερίσιν  
 μῦθοι τὰδ' ἐς ἀνθρώπους  
 ἤνεγκαν παρὰ καιρὸν ἄλλως . . .

But these words fit so well the character of the Chalcidian women that we may not with justice press them upon the poet. Helena, the cause of so many evils, the faithless wife, the destroyer of the very flower of Greece, — how could any believe her the offspring of the highest and best of the gods? The chorus might well doubt the truth of this story in their eagerness to avoid impiety by blaming the fancy of inventive poets rather than Zeus's daughter. After all, this doubt is not lasting. Just as any populace, the Euripidean chorus forget their doubts under the weight of different circumstances. Thus in the *Helena*, although some critics bracket verses 257–260, there is no dissenting view as to the authenticity of the words which the chorus of captive women sing in the presence of the Queen (213 ff.), and which most positively assume the truth of the same story denied in the *Aulid Iphigenia* :

. . . αἰὼν δυσαίων  
 τις ἔλαχεν ἔλαχεν, ὅτε σ' ἐτέκετο ματρόθεν  
 χιονόχρως κύκνου πτερῶ  
 Ζεὺς πρέπων δι' αἰθέρος.

If Euripides wished to prove the falsehood of the story why should he admit in the *Helena* what he had questioned in the *Aulid Iphigenia*?

<sup>1</sup> *Euripide et l'esprit de son théâtre*, p. 65 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Eurip. *Iphigen. Aul.* 794–800.

Would it not appear more probable, if we ascribe both passages to the chorus rather than to the poet ?

Nor is the case different in the choral ode of the *Electra*, in which the chorus express their doubts about the story of the sun changing his course because of the fatal contest of Atreus and Thyestes (737 ff.):

λέγεται, τὰν δὲ πί-  
στιν σμικρὰν παρ' ἔμοιγ' ἔχει,  
στρέψαι θερμὰν ἀέλιον  
χρυσωπὸν ἔδραν ἀλλά-  
ξαντα δυστυχίᾳ βροτεί-  
ω θανάτῳ ἔνεκεν δίκας.  
φοβεροὶ δὲ βροτοῖσι μῦ-  
θοι κέρδος πρὸς θεῶν θεραπεί-  
αν. ὦν οὐ μναςθεῖσα πόσιν  
κτείνεις, κλεινῶν συγγενέτειρ' ἀδελφῶν.

What has been attributed to the doubting poet fits well both the development of the play and the character of the singers. The fortune of Orestes and Electra has reached a very critical moment. Uncertain as to the issue of the contest, restless with anxiety and fear, the Argive women try to strengthen their hopes by recalling the just outcome of past trials, and they remember the story according to which the stars had once changed their course in defence of justice. But at the end of their song, fear overcomes their hope, and, with evident inconsistency which is nevertheless unquestionably human, they seem to express indirectly their doubt about the truth of the legend. For that very reason, our suspense is all the greater, and our joy all the stronger at the unexpected success. A masterstroke in the dramatic art of Euripides should not be obscured by the hypothesis of religious self-confession.

Nor is the religion of our poet misinterpreted only in the choral parts of his dramas. Scholars of rare critical acumen like to contrast the Aeschylean *Eumenides* with the Euripidean.<sup>1</sup> Aeschylus did not hesitate to bring the Furies before the eyes of the audience in form, speech, and action so that no one should question their presence. But

<sup>1</sup> Decharme, *Euripide*, etc., p. 68. Cf. Nestle, *Euripides, der Dichter der gr. Aufklärung*, p. 78 ff.

Euripides makes them empty apparitions, the imaginings of an hallucinated mind, phantoms which Orestes alone in his illness can see, and which are, of course, entirely unsuspected either by Electra or by the chorus (*Orest.* 255 ff.):

- OP. ὦ μήτερ, ἱκετεύω σε, μὴ ᾧπίσειέ μοι  
τὰς αἱματωποὺς καὶ δρακοντώδεις κόρας.  
αὗται γὰρ αὗται πλησίον θρώσκουσί μου.
- HA. Μέν', ὦ ταλαίπωρ', ἀτρέμα σοῖς ἐν δεμνίοις.  
ὄρῳ γὰρ οὐδὲν ὦν δοκεῖς σάφ' εἶδέναι . . .

From these verses, the conclusion has been drawn that Euripides did not believe in the existence of the awful Furies. But how can we assume this unbelief for Euripides without involving Aeschylus? Do these phantoms of the Euripidean Orestes differ at all from what we hear of in the end of the Aeschylean play of the *Choephoroe*? In the latter play, too, Orestes alone sees the terrible goddesses, while the chorus try in vain to rid him of his fancies. The hero is entirely absorbed in his own visions and grows more and more helpless as the numbers of the hideous apparitions increase (1044 ff.):

- OP. ᾧΑ, ᾧ.  
δμῳαὶ γυναῖκες αἶδε Γοργόνων δίκην  
φαιοχίτωνες καὶ πεπλεκτανημέναι  
πυκνοῖς δράκουσιν' οὐκέτ' ἂν μείναιμ' ἐγώ.
- XO. Τίνες σε δόξαι, φίλτατ' ἀνθρώπων πατρί,  
στροβοῦσιν; ἴσχε, μὴ φόβου νικῶ πολὺ.
- OP. Οὐκ εἰσὶ δόξαι τῶνδε πημάτων ἐμοί.  
σαφῶς γὰρ αἶδε μητρὸς ἔγκοτοι κύνες.
- XO. Ποταίνιον γὰρ αἰμά σοι χεροῖν ἔτι  
ἐκ τῶνδ' εἰς ταραγμὸς ἐς φρένας πίτνει.
- OP. ᾧΑναξ ᾧΑπολλων, αἶδε πληθύουσι δὴ,  
κᾶξ ὁμμάτων στάζουσιν αἶμα δυσφιλές . . .

Are these Furies less phantom-like or less unreal than those of Euripides? Certainly we cannot conclude from such passages that Euripides did not believe in the existence of the goddesses of vengeance. After all, the Euripidean Furies are not less empty creations than Lyssa in the *Hercules* or Death in the *Alcestis*. If we deny the existence of the first simply because they do not appear, should we believe that Eurip-

ides considered Lyssa and Death as personal gods simply because he makes them walk on the stage? Indeed, we are stepping on precarious ground. Let us rather confess that it is most difficult to distinguish the poet from the philosopher, and that the poet's own religion may be vaguely detected but never accurately determined.

What, however, the chorus has lost as a religious exponent in Euripides, has been skilfully balanced by realism. Indeed, it is through realism that the poet accomplishes the freshness and vividness of his choruses. He had to take away the religious potency which to his mind had grown obsolete in the chorus and to reserve it for argumentative treatment in the speeches of his individual characters. But to save the dramatic effect, he had to introduce another method of appeal. When Aeschylus brought the Eumenides on the Athenian stage, he relied on the religious belief of his audience to effect the awe at which he had aimed. In his day, Euripides doubted the wisdom of such an expedient, but he was sure that human hearts would always be open to pathos. Thus in his *Orestes*, it is not the Furies who make the chorus, but young women, friends of Electra, who come to sympathize with her sufferings. The murdered father is, indeed, avenged. But the unfortunate brother, the tragic avenger, is smitten with a terrible woe. Over him, as he lies in a restless slumber, they find Electra vigilant. The anxiety which she displays lest her friends awaken him, and the pathetic response of the chorus may not arouse awe among the spectators, but will always have a powerful effect on the human emotions of any audience in any age. In the *Prometheus Bound*, the daughters of Oceanus come in a winged chariot to witness the sufferings of the Titan. They are goddesses and they commune with gods. They come from their abode in the depths of the sea. The spectator rises to the divine heights and beholds a divine tragedy with inspired reverence. But in the *Hippolytus*, the sufferer is a woman; her passion is irresistible love, a subject which Aeschylus disdained and Sophocles touched most distantly. Euripides finds such a theme not unworthy of his Muse inasmuch as it is human. Yet he goes even further than that, in a manner which itself would suffice to stir an audience. He adds realism to realism, and pictures in the minds of his spectators a background which is bound to heighten their emotions. The Trozenian women, as they enter, say whence and why they come (121 ff.):



Ὕκεανοῦ τις ὕδωρ στάζουσα πέτρα λέγεται,  
 βαπτὰν κάλπισι ρυτὰν πα-  
 γὰν προΐεισα κρημνῶν·  
 ὅθι μοί τις ἦν φίλα  
 πορφύρεα φάρεα  
 ποταμία δρόσῳ  
 τέγγουσα, θερ-  
 μᾶς δ' ἐπὶ νῶτα πέτρας εὐ-  
 αλίου κατέβαλλ'· ὅθεν  
 μοι πρῶτα φάτις ἦλθε δεσποίνας . . .

The picture of women gathered by the banks of a river and listening to the tale of another woman while they are washing is pleasant in its humbleness, and moving in its lifelikeness. But to the Athenians, who were accustomed to such pictures, this had a deeper meaning. It brought to each Athenian's mind vivid associations. As boys they had followed their mothers into the country where, by the bank of a river or brook, they had played and sported the day away while their mothers and sisters washed the raiments white, and engaged in gossip. The little and petty yet real and vivid adventures which they may have had were suddenly brought before them, while they sat in the theatre by the side of the poet. With a few strokes the picture immortalized by Homer in the Nausicaa episode and vivified in realism rises before them. The effect of the description is by no means less than the mother's hopeful cry "The sun! the sun!" at the sight of the first rays of the rising sun while her child struggles with death behind her, in the *Ghosts* of Ibsen. The same realistic touch we discover in the different interpretations which the Trozenian women give to the grief of Phaedra (141 ff.):

. . . ἡ σύ γ' ἔνθεος, ὦ κούρα,  
 εἴτ' ἐκ Πανὸς εἴθ' Ἑκάτας  
 ἡ σεμνῶν Κορυβάντων φοι-  
 τᾶς ἡ ματρὸς ὀρείας;  
 — σὺ δ' ἀμφὶ τὰν πολύθηρον Δί-  
 κτυνναν ἀμπλακίαις ἀνιέ-  
 ρος ἀθύτων πελάνων τρύχῃ; . . .  
 — ἡ πόσιν . . .  
 ποιμαίνει τις ἐν οἴκοις κρυ-  
 πτὰ κοίτα λεχέων σῶν; etc.

With the first verses of the chorus in the *Hippolytus*, we may compare those of the captive Greek maidens in the *Helena*. The exiled Queen is bewailing her evil fortunes now increased by Teucer's news, and her maidens come hastily to her (179 ff.):

κυανοειδὲς ἄμφ' ὕδωρ  
 ἔτυχον ἑλικά τ' ἀνὰ χλόαν  
 φοίνικας ἀλίου πέπλους  
 αὐγαῖσιν ἐν χρυσέαις  
 ἀμφὶ δόνακας ἔρρυσιν  
 θάλπουσα· (ποτνίας δ' ἐμᾶς),  
 ἔνθεν οἰκτρὸν ἀνεβόασεν,  
 ὁμαδὸν ἔκλυον, ἄλυρον ἔλεγον,  
 ὅτι ποτ' ἔλακεν αἰάγμα-  
 σι στένουσα, Νύμφα τις  
 οἶα Ναῖς  
 ὄρεσι φυγάδα νόμον ἰεῖσα  
 γοερὸν, ὑπὸ δὲ πέτρῃνα γύαλα  
 κλαγγαῖσι  
 Πανὸς ἀναβοᾶ γάμους.

The same artist, the same art. He is constantly at work touching clay with clay, and moving human beings with pictures of human things. For a dramatist no way is surer than this. We may often grow forgetful of the gods; but who can detach humanity itself from his own life?

To repeat our argument, the Euripidean choruses do not engage in philosophic speculations with regard to religion, and if they ever seem to philosophize, it is a sort of popular philosophy they express, not the poet's own views. This is true of all the plays almost without exception. Even the *Suppliants* illustrate this point of view in spite of the nature of the play in which Aeschylus would have found a splendid opportunity to revel in religious thought. Although the Suppliant Mothers never forget piety, which is particularly expressed in their prayers to the gods, yet they are so absorbed in their own woes that they think more of them than of the gods. Even when the battle which is to decide the issue of their supplication rages on, the unfortunate women cannot lift their voices to a constant prayer. Their ode is full of painful uncertainty and dismay, and it is only toward the end that they address a few verses to the gods.

Is then the tragedy of the *Bacchae* not an exception to this rule? It is neither in the importance of the chorus nor in the consistency and sequence of the lyric parts that the *Bacchae* of Euripides is unparalleled by any of his extant tragedies. In these respects there are other plays that equal it. But in its religious mood it is undoubtedly unique. From the very opening of the tragedy to the end, we feel that we breathe a religious atmosphere which we cannot find in any other work of the same writer. We are constantly in the shadow of religion and we meet with a sanctity of feeling and with a piety of thought which are peculiarly reminiscent of Aeschylus. It is true, Euripides has shown signs of such piety in other plays besides this, nor is the *Ion* the only example we could cite. But in all the others, human nature and human affections are the centre of the poet's attention, whereas in the *Bacchae*, the religion of the people is praised to such a high degree and with such seriousness that, at first thought, Euripides seems to have changed entirely. Yet, the play is Euripidean after all, and Euripides is very difficult to convert to old views. He is the same poet, a lover of simplicity, a pursuer of covert truth. The past still holds him fast with the sweet bonds of memory, and with sincere longing does he look back to the years of his childhood, when, far from philosophical doubts, he venerated the religion of the people with a candid and simple soul. Meanwhile, time passes away, and the boy of yesterday is now a man. When the age of simplicity is past, he feels the hunger for truth, and in its pursuit, he enters a long and hard struggle in which the bitterness of the loss constantly detracts from the recent gains of thought. He sometimes vacillates, but he never becomes a cynic or a derider, as Verrall seems to believe. He has made his choruses representatives of the Athenian populace that he might interpret rather than condemn the simple, passionate, impulsive world. In the chorus of the *Bacchae*, the people have their best interpreter. Euripides is in this play so affected by the simple faith of the humble that he seems to forget his philosophy in his poetic appreciation. Not that there is nothing to betray Euripidean doubts. In the attitude of Pentheus, we discover what Euripides might call his worse self, the impersonation of the spirit of revolt which the friend of Anaxagoras must have often felt rising from the depths of his earnest longing for truth rather than the pretences of sacred legend. But there is also no

doubt that Euripides has in this tragedy taken a decided stand against the spirit of scrutiny in religion, and for once, at least, in his creations, he pays unqualified respect to the popular pantheon. Against the woe-breeding scepticism of Pentheus, the chorus explain the vanity of wisdom, and with a sentiment and lyricism that is almost convincing, prove unwise the wise, who buy unhappiness with their wisdom. Not that we do not find similar arguments in other plays. But in the *Bacchae*, the contrast between religion and wisdom is so prominent that it becomes the very theme of the play. With a wonderful power, the religion of the people is amplified and exalted. Thus it seems as if old Olympus is restored before us, and from the tranquil twilight of its peaks the Homeric gods rule with relentless power. Them we must obey; else sorrow shall wait for us.

The students of Euripides have conjectured more than one explanation of this wonderful declaration. The favored supposition is that the drama is due to the effect that the poet's journey to Macedonia had on his thoughts. Detached in the last period of his life from the atmosphere of Athens, which was pregnant with philosophic controversy and blatant free thought, in the austere background of immense forests haunted by wolves and fawns, of lofty mountain-tops boldly piercing the skies, of precipitous rocks shaded with pine, entwined with ivy and bryony, and rising over eternally murmuring springs, Euripides' mystic tendencies welled into a current of power that carried him away. The sacred haunts of Pieria were about him. The whispers of the great oaks spoke forth the divine will of Zeus from the ground of aged shrines. The crystal palaces of the immortals stood in magnificent splendor above the clouds that crowned the highest peaks above the Pierian valleys and glens. Undoubtedly, in these very forests, the orgiastic rites of the Dionysiac cult were still performed in all their primitive fervor, and the poet must have seen many a woman of Macedonia inspired by the Bacchic touch, and joining in the orgies of the Wine-god with a wild enthusiasm which to the thought of Euripides had been long ago dead. These things did not happen in Athens. Their simple and unquestioning faith stirred in Euripides the flame that had inspired his childhood. Just as in later times, another poet, the trumpet-voiced Lucretius, felt the overpowering mysticism of a shepherd's pipe in the wilderness, Euripides let the magic trance

guide his spirit, and he wrote a tragedy, the soul of which is legendary religion. There is little scrutiny and less doubt, but almost a blind acceptance of the divine agency and of the power of faith which we can find only in Aeschylus.

The chorus consists of fifteen Eastern women, who enter in front of the palace of Pentheus, "the light of the sunrise streaming upon their long white robes and ivy-bound hair." At one side is visible the sacred tomb of Semele, a little enclosure overgrown with wild vines, with a cleft in its rocky floor from which there issues at times steam or smoke. The women wear fawnskins over their robes, and some of them carry timbrels, some pipes and other instruments. They enter stealthily till they see that the place is empty, and then begin their mystic song of worship (64 ff.):<sup>1</sup>

*A maiden:*

From Asia, from the dayspring that uprises,  
To Bromios ever glorying we came.  
We laboured for our Lord in many guises;  
We toiled, but the toil is as the prize is;  
Thou Mystery, we hail thee by thy name!

*Another:*

Who lingers in the road? Who spies us?  
He shall hide him in his house nor be bold.  
Let the heart keep silence that defies us;  
For I sing this day to Dionysus  
The song that is appointed from of old.

*All:*

Oh, blessed he in all wise,  
Who hath drunk the Living Fountain,  
Whose life no folly staineth,  
And his soul is near to God;  
Whose sins are lifted, pall-wise,  
As he worships on the Mountain,  
And where Cybele ordaineth,  
Our Mother, he has trod:  
His head with ivy laden  
And his thyrsus tossing high,  
For our God he lifts his cry:  
"Up, O Bacchae, wife and maiden,  
Come, O ye Bacchae, come;

<sup>1</sup> From Gilbert Murray's translation of the *Bacchae*.

Oh, bring the Ivy-bestower,  
God-seed of God the Sower,  
Bring Bromios in his power  
From Phrygia's mountain dome;  
To street and town and tower,  
Oh, bring ye Bromios home" . . .

As we perceive, the whole song is full of orgiastic religious emotion. With exultant heart, and mind entirely swayed by religion, they sing and dance in the hyporchematic manner, and we feel as if we were initiated into the Bacchic cult. We are forced to listen to every word by the stream of emotion that carries each word forward. In accordance with their frantic piety is the Bacchae's boldness in the dialogue parts. When Pentheus contends against Teiresias in terms of impious invective upon the new god, they seem to forget the natural hesitancy which marks such choral interruptions of the dialogue, and they boldly rebuke the impious king for his blindness (263):

*τῆς δυσσεβείας. ὦ ξέν', οὐκ αἰδῶ θεούς,  
Κάδμον τε τὸν σπείραντα γηγενῇ στάχυν,  
'Εχίονος δ' ὦν παῖς καταισχύνεις γένος;*

In the same controversial spirit they praise Teiresias for his defence of their god, and, later, sing their next ode in which, with indignation and revengefulness, they call upon the Mother of the Gods to smite the arrogance of the king. Then suddenly falling into a reflective mood, they give a warning to the tyrant (370 ff.):

*'Οσία πότνα θεῶν,  
'Οσία δ' ἅ κατὰ γᾶν  
χρυσέαν πτέρυγα φέρεις,  
τάδε Πενθέως αἴτεις; . . .  
— ἀχαλίνων στομάτων  
ἀνόμου τ' ἀφροσύνας  
τὸ τέλος δυστυχία·  
ὃ δὲ τᾶς ἡσυχίας  
βίος καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν  
ἀσάλευτόν τε μένει καὶ  
συνέχει δώματα· πόρσω  
γὰρ ὁμῶς αἰθέρα ναίων-  
τες ὀρῶσιν τὰ βροτῶν οὐρανίδαι . . .*

At first reading, these words seem to be of a great weight which has induced many to suspect a personal belief of Euripides hiding in them. But this view is no more Euripidean than it is Aeschylean or Herodotean.<sup>1</sup> It is rather a popular dogma with the Greeks which appears again and again in the various writers of ancient Greece. Thus in Herodotus, the doctrine that extreme happiness involves extreme danger and sorrow is appealed to as a common law, and he is only one of a whole legion of writers in whom the same sentiment is often expressed. Nemesis treads upon the footprints of *hybris* constantly. Aeschylus himself gives us the valuable testimony that this doctrine was already an old tradition in his age, from which he alone dared depart (*Agam.* 750 ff.):

παλαίφατος δ' ἐν βροτοῖς γέρων λόγος  
τέτυκται, μέγαν τελε-  
σθέντα φωτὸς ὄλβον  
τεκνοῦσθαι μηδ' ἄπαιδα θνήσκειν,  
ἐκ δ' ἀγαθῆς τύχας γένει  
βλαστάνειν ἀκόρεστον οἰζύν·  
δίχα δ' ἄλλων μονόφρων ἐι-  
μί. τὸ δυσσεβὲς γὰρ ἔργον  
μετὰ μὲν πλείονα τίκτει,  
σφετέρῃ δ' εἰκότα γέννῃ·  
οἴκων δ' ἄρ' εὐθυδίκων  
καλλίπαις πότμος αἰεὶ . . .

This testimony, I believe, settles the question. Through the words of the Bacchae which we have quoted, we do not hear any philosophic view of the poet, but a traditional maxim of the populace which commands our attention because of the fine raiment in which it appears. But even more puzzling seems to be what the same maidens sing a little later (395 ff.):

<sup>1</sup> Herod. 1, 5; especially the story of Polycrates, 3, 39-46; cf. 3, 40: ἐμοὶ δὲ αἰσαὶ μεγάλαι εὐτυχίαι οὐκ ἀρέσκουσι, τὸ θεῖον ἐπισταμένῳ ὥς ἐστι φθονερόν, etc. Aesch. *Pers.* 821 ff., especially 92 ff.:

δολόμητιν δ' ἀπάταν θεοῦ  
τίς ἀνὴρ θνατὸς ἀλύξει; . . .  
φιλόφρων γὰρ παρασαίνει  
βροτὸν εἰς ἄρκυας ἅτα . . .

τὸ σοφὸν δ' οὐ σοφία  
τό τε μὴ θνητὰ φρονεῖν·  
βραχὺς αἰὼν· ἐπὶ τούτῳ  
δέ τις ἂν μεγάλα διώκων  
τὰ παρόντ' οὐχὶ φέροι· μαι-  
νομένων οἶδε τρόποι καὶ  
κακοβούλων παρ' ἔμοι-  
γε φωτῶν.

Thus any man who endeavors to attain greatness through power or wisdom forfeits his own happiness, and cannot escape the envy of the gods. In this thought, the chorus of the Bacchae are certainly in advance of the popular doctrine which was in vogue among the Athenians and the other Greeks. Not without good reason should we suspect here Euripides himself complaining against his own fate. For he, too, possessed this bitter gift of wisdom for which he paid in sorrow, the same penalty paid by Anaxagoras, Phidias, and Pericles before him, and by Socrates after him. Thus, although these words do not formulate the personal belief of Euripides, they imply what the poet had suffered by not making the chorus's sentiment his own canon. But he has so disguised his just complaint in the words and character of the Bacchae, and he is so far from expressing any pride for his wisdom and understanding that he even lets the chorus, which are the people, have precedence in condemning with apparent justice this bootless possession. Nor do the sentiments expressed fit any less the nature and character of the Bacchae. Thus, like diamonds, which gather and reflect light without losing their own properties, the Euripidean choruses may sometimes reflect or rather imply the meditations of the poet without violating their own nature. The mask is never dropped, but within the laws governing his dramatic technique we may here and there find in unsuspected corners throughout his plays reminiscences of the poet's personality, a personality which permeates the whole of his work but cannot be easily detected with certainty. Except for this implication, the chorus of the Bacchae follow here as well as in all their utterances the popular doctrine. In the words that follow soon afterwards with regard to Venus and Love, we recognize again popular feelings re-echoed ever since Mimnermus:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eurip. *Bacch.* 403 ff. Cf. the fragment of Mimnermus:

Τίς δὲ βίος, τί δὲ τερπνὸν ἄτερ χρυσῆς Ἀφροδίτης;



ἰκοίμαν ποτὶ Κύπρον  
 νᾶσον τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας,  
 ἵν' οἱ θελξίφρονες νέμον-  
 ται θνατοῖσιν Ἑρωτες . . .

The same thought underlies the whole ode to the end. They praise the new god, who loves the lowly with their passions, and does not envy the great, the friend of peace, the lover of joys. Power and wisdom are vanity. The portion of the multitude should be preferred:

τὸ πλῆθος ὃ τι  
 τὸ φαυλότερον ἐνόμισε χρεῖ-  
 ταί τε τόδ' ἂν δεχοίμαν.

When the disguised god is led bound into the palace to be imprisoned, the chorus raise their anxious cries to Dionysus to come and save them from the hand of violence. Then the miraculous voice is heard, an earthquake shakes the pillars of the palace, fire leaps forth from the tomb of Semele, and the maidens, obeying the voice, cast themselves in awe upon the ground to be lifted up by the delivered god, who appears before the portals of the palace, followed by Pentheus. Then, while the king is in the palace donning the shameful apparel suggested by the god, the Bacchae sing of their longing for the orgiastic rites, and of their desire "to dance with delicate foot through the dark hours of the night, lifting their heads high into the balmy air like fawns sporting on the grass of the laughing meadow . . . delighting in spaces unhaunted by man and in the young plants of the shadowy forests." Again they return to popular philosophy. Pentheus is the enemy of their god and, therefore, hateful to them. They wish for his punishment, and sing in Euripidean measures of the traditional joy of overcoming one's enemy. Then, in words that remind us of the Hebraic tendencies of Aeschylus, they sing of the slow but sure advance of the divine vengeance. But soon they return to the popular creed to chide those who scrutinize divine things, and to praise those whose fortune is moderation.

When Pentheus in the disguise of a woman passes before them following unsuspectingly the revengeful god who leads him into the meshes of a horrible fate, the Bacchae have no feeling of sympathy.

On the contrary, in their eagerness to see vengeance accomplished, they follow the king into the mountain forests, and see with great joy his tortures at the hands of his own kin. Their exultation at this repulsive vision is so elevated through religious transportation and lyric ecstasy that it appears even just and sanctified. The rapid metre, the restless rhythm, the intense feeling beat their words into a storm of passion, and they sing and dance in the tumultuous manner of the hyporcheme, if this form of dance-song is to be found in the Greek tragedy. In the same manner, they receive the news of the great disaster, and they give vent to their joy in spite of the messenger's threats. Then Agave comes with the horrible trophy in her hands, boasting in the hallucination of her accomplishment. The Bacchae continue to indulge in their joy which, under the horrible circumstances, seems to assume the form of loathsome malevolence, but soon the mother's sorrow drives them into silence. Their last words are those we find at the close of many a Euripidean play, but nowhere do they fit better than here:

πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,  
πολλὰ δ' ἄελλπτως κραινοῦσι θεοί·  
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,  
τῶν δ' ἀδοκῆτων πόρον ἡῦρε θεός.  
τοιόνδ' ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα.

Thus in the *Bacchae* the chorus becomes again a primitive chorus, and seems even to take on the religious significance which was of primary importance in the earliest poets and of uttermost gravity in Aeschylus. There is, however, a serious difference. The religious lessons which were expounded by Aeschylus and his predecessors through the chorus were certainly the belief of the poets themselves, whether they shared this belief with the people or endeavored to improve and transcend popular doctrines. But what the Euripidean chorus have to say about religion represents only popular doctrine, not the poet's own belief. To this rule, even the *Bacchae* makes no exception. True, the religious sentiments of the play often rise to such an ecstasy that to many, clad as they are in the powerful splendor of the choral odes, they appear to be the sentiments of the poet himself. Thus even scholars of first rank take the words of the *Bacchae* as a confession of the conversion of Euripides from his free thought to the popu-

lar religion.<sup>1</sup> This error would be avoided, if we accept the religious references of the Euripidean chorus not as representing the belief of the poet, as is the case with the Aeschylean chorus, but as issuing from the religious and moral convictions of the populace enhanced by the poet's sympathetic treatment.

#### 6. THE HUMANITY OF THE CHORUS IN EURIPIDES

For Euripides and his age, the fountain of religion so dear to Aeschylus was dry. Neither the people nor the chorus were able to understand and express the thoughts of a few scrutinizing individuals. But even when philosophy grew above the chorus, the power of humanity remained untouched. Indeed, humanity goes so far as to embrace religion, inasmuch as the religious motive is applied in the case of the chorus not to instruct but to rouse emotion. Taking the people's religion as an active force independently of its truth, the Euripidean choruses base their strength and effectiveness on realistic touches, on familiar pictures, on pathetic notes, and on lyrical outbursts of passions deeply human. Thus they come much nearer to being real men and women than the choruses of either Aeschylus or Sophocles.

If we examine the nature of the Aeschylean choruses, we are inclined to see in them symbols of mighty forces or principles, the personifications of certain classes, the incarnations of some ideas, the embodiments of some cities. At any rate, they stand apart and face the world of the individual as enemies or friends, as judges or comforters, but from a superior or, at least, a different plane. In the Suppliant Maidens, we see Persecuted Maidenhood. In the daughters of Oceanus, Tender Pity. In the old men of Argos of the *Agamemnon*, Battling Thought. In the Libation Bearers, Rankling Revenge. In the Eumenides, Everlasting Remorse. In the Women of Thebes, a City. In the Persians, a Nation. The choruses of Sophocles are drawn nearer to the individuals, but seem to keep a respectful aloofness, a modest hesitancy that stamps them as spectators rather than as actors. They wish to behold rather than mingle with the world of

<sup>1</sup> Gomperz, *Griechische Denker*, ii, p. 12; Patin, *Tragiques Grecs*, i, 46; cf. Decharme, *Euripide*, p. 75; Nestle, *Eurip.* p. 75. Also Wilamowitz, *Herakles: Einleitung*, p. 379; *Comment.* p. 54, and the fine criticism of Murray, *Euripides and his Age*, p. 179.

the individuals, and they do not enter it unless they are compelled by the stream of circumstances. Their deeds are temperate, their feelings modest. They know the value of restraint and they never lose sight of their dignity. Even in their *kommoi*, they reach neither the Aeschylean depth nor the Euripidean pathos. They moan as thoughtful friends would moan; they act as sensible friends would act; and they speak as prudent friends would speak. They are men and women, yet wrapped in a world of their own, in an atmosphere of calm reflection and of undisturbed serenity. They are ideal spectators with an ideal mind and an ideal attitude without losing their right of action or of intervention.

With Euripides, the veil of ideality is torn away, and the chorus often forget that they are the representatives of the people, whose influence is strong though mute, and whose power is great though impersonal. They assume more of flesh and bone, and they are men and women, just as thoughtless, impulsive, and reckless as the mobs that crowded the Athenian assembly to applaud a Cleon or a Hyperbolus. Their feelings are real, their thoughts depend on their moods. Their principles are drowned in their sympathies, and their moral contemplations spring from the circumstances. The Corinthian women come to stand by Medea, and under the sway of their impulse for her, they do not care to know the way of her revenge upon Jason, if it can only be accomplished. When she unfolds her plan of revenge, they show no sympathy whatever for Jason, and urge her to enact her plan although they know not what it is. Without hesitation, they promise the silence which the princess of Colchis skilfully imposes upon them. Their words are few and determined (267):

δράσω τὰδ' ἐνδίκως γὰρ ἐκτείση πόσιν,  
Μήδεια!

But when they hear that the plan includes the death of the children, their impulse revolts against the deed. They attempt to dissuade her, but their efforts are vain. They see that she is resolved, and are anxious to keep themselves pure from the stain of so horrible a crime. Their natural weakness, however, is in their way, and they spend so much time in choosing between their instinct and their duty as Medea's confidants that, when they finally declare for the former, they find the

deed accomplished, and can do nothing but break their vow of silence and tell Jason what has been perpetrated.

Hypocrisy is not a less human characteristic of many a Euripidean chorus. The women of Chalcis give a joyful welcome to Clytaemnestra in order to encourage the queen's hopes, although they know that they are false (598 ff.):

Στῶμεν, Χαλκίδος ἔκγονα θρέμματα,  
τὴν βασιλείαν δεξώμεθ, ὄχων  
ἄπο μὴ σφαλερώς ἐπὶ γαῖαν,  
ἀγανῶς δὲ χεροῖν μαλακῇ ῥώμῃ,  
μὴ ταρβήσῃ . . .

Likewise, in the *Electra*, the women of the country show a merry face to the tyrannous mother that she may not suspect Aegisthus' end or her own danger. The more flattering the words appear the more artful is their dissimulation. Their verses are fraught with a certain latent acerbity and a horrible irony that render the passage infinitely tragic (988 ff.):

XO. Ἰώ,  
βασιλεία γύναι χθονὸς Ἀργείας,  
παῖ Τυνδάρεω,  
καὶ τοῖν ἀγαθοῖν ξύγγονε κούροι  
Διός, οὗ φλογερὸν αἰθέρ' ἐν ἄστροις  
ναίουσι, βροτῶν ἐν ἀλδὸς ῥοθίοις  
τιμὰς σωτήρας ἔχοντες·  
χαῖρε, σεβίζω σ' ἴσα καὶ μάκαρας  
πλούτου μεγάλης τ' εὐδαιμονίας.  
τὰς σὰς δὲ τύχας θεραπεύεσθαι  
καιρός. χαῖρ', ὦ βασιλεία.

We may cite one instance after another to show the humanity and individual clearness of the Euripidean choruses. Their self-consciousness often makes them forget their friends and think entirely of themselves. The Trojan Women upon hearing the lamentations of Hecuba come upon the stage not so much to fulfil their choral function in consoling her as to be informed of their own fortune. They have learned that the Achaeans are embarking, and they ask Hecuba what are the enemies' plans with regard to the captive women of Troy.

Their song is a lamentation about themselves rather than about their queen.<sup>1</sup> In a similar play, the *Hecuba*, the chorus consisting again of Trojan women appear before Hecuba's tent to announce to the unfortunate queen the new atrocity of the Achaeans, who have decided to sacrifice Polyxena to the shade of Achilles. They are followed by Odysseus, who comes to drag the victim to the sacrificial altar. When this is done, and Hecuba lies prostrated on the ground and overcome by the fearful blow, the captive women do not attempt to comfort her. Why should they? Her grief is too deep for any comfort. Their compassion is silenced by the immensity of her woe, and their attention absorbed by their own sorrows. Have they not lost all? Are they not left alone, without hope, without relatives, without country, the captives of their destroyers? From their agony rises their pathetic questioning of the sea breeze to tell them of the place where they are to serve (444 ff.):

ΧΟ. Αὔρα, ποντίας αὔρα,  
 ἄτε ποντοπόρους κομί-  
 ζεις θοὰς ἀκάτους ἐπ' οἶδμα λίμνας,  
 ποῖ με τὰν μελέαν πορεύ-  
 σεις; τῷ δουλόσυνος πρὸς οἶ-  
 κον κτηθεῖς ἀφίξομαι; ἦ  
 Δωρίδος ὄρμον αἶας;  
 ἦ Φθιάδος . . .

We have already had occasion to note the human touches of the chorus in the *Hercules*, and similar examples may be found in the *Rhesus*, the *Phoenissae*, the *Orestes*, and other plays. The guards of the *Rhesus* are drawn with exquisite realism. The captive women in *Tauris* never forget their character as captives wasting their lives among barbarians, far from their own land. The women of Phthia in the *Andromache*, are ever conscious of their birth and of their native pride that together with Andromache's noble dignity prevents them from winning a foreign woman's confidence. All the choruses whether of men or women live, speak, and act like men and women of the common people, τὸ πλῆθος . . . τὸ φαυλότερον, to use Euripides' own words. Never do they rise above this level except in the *Bacchae* and in the

<sup>1</sup> Eurip. *Troiad.* 153, 511, 799 ff.

*Aulid Iphigenia*. Even in the exceptions, the level is not much higher. A certain fancifulness may obscure the realism of the one, and a veil of symbolism may affect the humanity of the other. But neither the chorus of the *Bacchae* rise above popular doctrine, nor the women of Chalcis forget their own human characteristics in blending themselves with the women of greater Greece.

More than once we have already come upon examples of Euripidean pathos. It is one of the favorite human touches with which our poet perfects the humanity of his choruses. The funeral *kommos* as we find it in the *Hippolytus*, the *Alcestis*, the *Andromache*, the *Troades*, and the *Suppliants*, gives us the most splendid examples. In none of these funeral responsive songs do we find the Aeschylean sublimity. Aeschylus on such occasions strives to rouse in the hearts of the spectators an awe which springs from the heaviness with which supernatural powers visit human sin. Euripides is satisfied with pathos. The sufferings of humanity seem to absorb his sympathy, and this sympathy he wishes to impart to the spectator by simply displaying the pain of the sufferer in all its pathetic aspects. He likes to lay his hand upon the wounds of men and watch the agony that rises therefrom without looking for the divine hand that deals the wound. He is the poet of an individualistic age. Mankind under the weight of a war that obeyed no principle and heeded no justice forgot the watchful eyes of the gods who, darkly working out their inscrutable will, had in past times smitten the arrogant and delivered Greece from the power of the foreign intruder. In the days of Euripides, men suffered without reason and without sin. The individual, at least, had begun to entertain such thoughts. Concentrating his thoughts upon himself, man began to efface from his mind the mountain-tops of Olympus, over which eternal calm reigned, undisturbed by rain or snow and permeated with the simple twilight of the Homeric faith. The clouds which threatened his own existence were so dark as to obliterate these beautiful visions of the child. Thus wherever he saw pain, he looked for no justice, and sought no divine agency. He was impelled to forget the mighty spirits, that had ruled the universe, by the constant uncertainty of the life before him, a life fraught with unaccountable confusion and irremediable woe. Euripides lived in this age and felt its pulse. He cared not for the giants who were dead. The heroes of Aeschylus or of Sophocles — what were

they to him? Human suffering he saw in himself and about him, and, unable to interpret it in the resigned artistic serenity of Sophocles, he plunged into it to meet sorrow with sorrow and pathos with pathos.

To recapitulate: The choruses of Euripides have retained their gravity, although they have relinquished their function as religious and moral teachers, because they have increased in human interest. There is no idealism in them. Their effect is won through direct appeal to human emotions, through realism, and through lyricism. They stir with their pictures and actions, they touch or soothe with the sounds of their songs. No religion or morality is strong with them except as popular forces. They flee to them for refuge like common men and women in the time of need. But if their human desires are baffled, with an inconsistency deeply human, they dare revolt against religious and moral agencies, and assert the voice of their own flesh. For Sophoclean moderation, we should not look here. As in the populace, so in the Euripidean chorus, excess is joined to every action and feeling. Wisdom, indeed, is not the lot of the many.

#### 7. ACTION IN THE EURIPIDEAN CHORUS

The question of action has been already touched in our discussion of the dialogue and of the choral odes. But we must make clear how far the Euripidean chorus interferes with the action of the drama. Can we consider the chorus as an actor? If by action we understand physical doing, then action on the part of the chorus is very rare. But this does not differentiate the chorus from any other actor. Physical action on the Greek stage is generally avoided. The exceptions to this rule are very few. Thus in Aeschylus, we see Prometheus chained before our eyes, and the Egyptian herald attempting to drag the daughters of Danaus by violence from the altars of suppliants. In Sophocles, we have the suicide of Ajax and the painful sufferings of Philoctetes. Euripides furnishes us with more numerous examples: the binding of Dionysus in the *Bacchae*, and Agave's play with the head of her own son; the violence of the herald and Alcmena's revengefulness in the *Heracleidae*; Orestes' unrestrained threat as he lifts his sword to strike Hermione; Polyneices' fearful approach to his paternal palace; Hercules' awakening in the midst of his bleeding victims. In spite of





Of equal importance is the example found in the *Rhesus*. The chorus of guards, who had left the stage, catch sight of two shadows by the tent of Rhesus slipping away in the dark, and immediately rush in pursuit. The unknown persons are Diomedes and Odysseus. The guards overtake them in front of Hector's tent, and obstruct their way in all directions, calling to each other for assistance, and lowering their spears against the intruders. Then some of the guards actually seize the spies, and threaten to slay them unless they give the signal (674 ff.):

XO. ξα ξα.

— βάλε βάλε βάλε βάλε

— θένε θένε

— τίς ἀνήρ; λεύσσετε· τοῦτον αὐδῶ.

— κλῶπες οἷτινες κατ' ὄρφνην τόνδε κινούσι στρατόν.

— δεῦρο δεῦρο πᾶς.

— τοῦσδ' ἔχω· τοῦσδ' ἔμαρψα.

— τίς ὁ λόχος; πόθεν ἔβας; ποδαπὸς εἶ;

ΟΔ. οὐ σε χρὴ εἰδέναι· θανῇ γὰρ σήμερον δράσας κακῶς.

XO. οὐκ ἐρεῖς ξύνθημα, λόγχην πρὶν διὰ στέρνων μολεῖν;

ΟΔ. ἴστω· θάρσει.

XO. πέλας ἴθι. παῖε πᾶς.

ΟΔ. ἦ σὺ δὴ 'Ρῆσον κατέκτας;

XO. ἀλλὰ τὸν κτενοῦντά σε . . .

ΟΔ. ἴσχε πᾶς τις.

XO. οὐ μὲν οὖν.

ΟΔ. ἂ. φίλιον ἄνδρα μὴ θένης.

XO. καὶ τί δὴ τὸ σῆμα;

ΟΔ. Φοῖβος.

XO. ἔμαθον· ἴσχε πᾶς δόρυ.

— οἶσθ' ὅποι βεβᾶσιν ἄνδρες;

ΟΔ. τῇδε πη κατείδομεν.

ἔρπε πᾶς κατ' ἔχνος αὐτῶν —

— ἦ βοήν ἐγερτέον;

— ἀλλὰ συμμάχους ταρασσεῖν δεινὸν ἐκ νυκτῶν φόβῳ . . .

A third example is furnished by the *Heraclidae*. When the hateful tyrant Eurystheus, conquered and captured, is dragged before Alc- the chorus that join in the action. Gilbert Murray emends the text in this passage in order to ascribe the choral part to a *θεράπων*. It is one of the very few points in which I cannot follow him.

mena, the old queen attempts to slay him and thus satisfy her long and rankling hatred. But the old Athenians of the chorus interfere between her and the captive (961 ff.):

XO. οὐκ ἔστ' ἀνυστὸν τόνδε σοι κατακτανεῖν.

ΘΕ. ἄλλως ἄρ' αὐτὸν αἰχμάλωτον εἵλομεν;

ΑΛ. εἴργει δὲ δὴ τίς τόνδε μὴ θνήσκειν νόμος;

XO. τοῖς τῇσδε χώρας προστάταισιν οὐ δοκεῖ.

ΑΛ. τί δὴ τόδ'; ἐχθροὺς τοισίδ' οὐ καλὸν κτανεῖν;

XO. οὐχ ὄντιν' ἄν γε ζῶνθ' ἔλωσιν ἐν μάχῃ . . .

These examples should suffice to explode the theory that it is impossible for the chorus of the Greek tragedy to engage in physical action. Like any other actor, the chorus avoid such an ultra-realism; but with men like Aeschylus and Euripides, who did not shrink from extremities altogether, even this medium is utilized. On the other hand, physical action is often threatened without coming to fulfilment. In the *Hippolytus*, when the chorus hear the cries of the nurse calling for help in behalf of Phaedra, who has committed suicide, they deliberate whether they should go into the palace and give assistance, but the thought that there will be many an attendant within the palace to respond to this need holds them back (782). In the *Hecuba*, the painful cries of Polymestor undergoing a fearful punishment in the hands of the embittered queen and of her fellow-captives agonize the women of the chorus. Fearing lest the king escape, they are about to rush in and help Hecuba; but before they move, Polymestor comes forth blind and helpless to prevent them from a vain attempt (1042 ff.). Likewise in the *Andromache*, the women of Phthia are kept from rushing into the palace by the appearance of Hermione, the very person for whom they would leave the stage (815 ff.). In the *Medea*, at the pitiful appeals of the children that are being murdered, the Corinthian women rush toward the entrance, and beat helplessly on the barred doors while they endeavor with vain chidings to prevent the inhuman mother from dealing her intended blow (1271 ff.). We have already referred to the scene in the *Hercules* in which the old companions of Amphitryon raise their staves, and threaten to meet violence with violence in behalf of the wife and children of Hercules.

Dramatic action, however, does not necessarily imply physical doing. Actors take part in the dramatic conflict not so much with

their hands as with their thought and mind. Nor must we forget that mental struggle as well as any turn in the dialogue which tends to arouse emotion is dramatic action. To use S. H. Butcher's words,<sup>1</sup> action "embraces not only the deeds, the incidents, the situations, but also the mental processes, and the motives which underlie the outward events or which result from them. It is the compendious expression for all these forces working together towards a definite end." With this Aristotelian conception of dramatic action, of *πρᾶξις*, in mind, we must admit that the chorus of Euripides take a great part in the action of the play, certainly not less than the chorus of Sophocles, although considerably less than that of Aeschylus. The creation of atmosphere, the instrumentality toward effecting the proper mental attitude on the part of the audience, the occasional clue toward revealing a character are too self-evident to the average reader to be made the subject of discussion. At times they even become necessary to develop the plot of the drama. More than once, they are indispensable for stating the antecedent events and creating a setting, and they always play an important expository rôle. We have had occasion more than once to refer to the importance that the chorus assumes in the *Ion*. The women attending Creusa become sometimes the key for turning the plot. It is their knowledge of the secret agreement between Xuthos and Ion that puts them in power for a while to close or continue the action of the play. Their decision to inform their mistress makes it possible for the conspiracy to form itself; and their presence of mind in the critical moment saves her from being instantly killed by her son. Again in the *Rhesus*, the guards awaken Hector to announce the results of their watch. This announcement begins the action by bringing about the despatch of Dolon to spy the enemy's camp. Later, it is they who, with Aeneas, persuade Hector to accept Rhesus as an ally. As to the scene in which they seize Odysseus and Diomedes, and are deceived into releasing them, we have already discussed its importance. In the *Helena*, it is the chorus who instruct the exiled queen to consult Theonoe on the fate of Menelaus, and it is they who by joining their prayers to those of Helena win the prophetess to their side, and persuade her to be silent with regard to Menelaus' presence and to the

<sup>1</sup> S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, London, 1895, pp. 310 ff.

plan of escape. In the *Bacchae*, it is the presence of the chorus that makes it possible for the messenger to unfold his awful tale, and thus prepare the entrance of the ill-fated Agave. In the *Tauric Iphigenia*, the chorus ineffectually but very dramatically attempt to prevent the messenger from meeting the king and announcing Iphigenia's escape. In the *Hippolytus*, it is the faithfulness of the Trozenian women to the dead queen that brings about the catastrophe of the play with the fulfilment of Theseus' curse on the innocent hero. In the *Hecuba*, it is the Trojan women who begin the action by bringing to the fallen queen the news that the Greeks have decided to sacrifice her daughter to the shade of Achilles.

From these examples, which are not the only ones, we may safely conclude that the chorus in Euripides as well as in Sophocles and Aeschylus takes an important part in the action; that Euripides at times, as is the case in the *Hercules*, the *Ion*, the *Helena*, and the *Alcestis*, makes his chorus a more important actor than Sophocles; that at least once, in the tragedy of the *Suppliant Women*, he approaches the Aeschylean heights by making the chorus the chief actor; but that in some cases, as in the *Electra*, and in the *Aulid Iphigenia*, the chorus takes in the action a part which is considerably less than that of any Sophoclean chorus, a fact, however, which is justified by the nature and character of the persons that compose such a chorus.

## 8. THE SECOND CHORUS IN EURIPIDES

More than once, we meet in Euripides with what we may call a second chorus, who sometimes are mute, but sometimes take part in the lyric lines of the play. Such a second chorus may be reasonably suspected in the *Heraclidae*. In the opening of this play, Iolaus, in stating the cause of his supplication, indicates that the younger sons of Hercules are sitting before him on the altar, while the older ones wander from land to land seeking protection.<sup>1</sup> From the words of the same speaker, we are also informed that the daughters of Hercules are also present although not visible as they sit with their mother in supplication within the walls of the temple. But it is not impossible that they, too, follow Alcmena when she comes forth to receive the glad

<sup>1</sup> Eurip. *Heraclid.* 9-11, 23-25, 31-34, 45-50, 67-72, 123-127.

news.<sup>1</sup> This supposition is strengthened by the plural used in verse 658: οὐκ ἴσμεν ἡμεῖς ταῦτα. However that may be, it is certain that the sons are present from the beginning to the end of the play in their suppliant posture on the altar. Their number is nowhere indicated, but it is very probable that it is equal to the number required to make up a chorus.

But the *Hippolytus* and the *Supplices* furnish us with two certain examples of a second chorus. In the first play, before the entrance of the Troezenian women, Hippolytus returns from the chase with a garland in his hands, which he dedicates to Artemis, and hangs on her altar before the palace. In this act, he is attended by servants, his fellow-huntsmen, who apparently stand about the altar and sing a fitting hymn to the divine huntress (58 ff.). Thus they perform what is distinctly a choral function. They are even led by a coryphaeus. For when the offering is made and Hippolytus entirely overlooks the goddess of love, the attendants are disturbed, and one of them, assuming the part of a leader, attempts to induce his master to pay some respect to the altar or statue of Aphrodite, which stands on the other side not far from the entrance of the palace. A lively dialogue ensues without result. Hippolytus refuses to follow a wise council, and enters the palace to be followed soon by the attendants, who do not forget to pray to the injured goddess as they pass by the altar. In the *Supplices*, besides the chorus of the suppliant mothers of the chiefs slain in Polynices' expedition against Thebes, who in the opening of the play with the olive boughs and fillet of supplicance sit about the altar in the forecourt of the temple of Demeter and Persephone in Eleusis, there sit also as suppliants a chorus of children, the sons of the same chiefs, as it appears from the dialogue between Aethra and Theseus (98 ff.):

ΘΗ. οἱ δ' ἀμφὶ τόνδε ("Αδραστον) παῖδες; ἢ τούτων τέκνα;

ΑΙ. οὔκ, ἀλλὰ νεκρῶν τῶν ὀλωλότων κόροι.

When the mothers rise to take their place in the orchestra, the children remain in the place of supplicance on the altar whence they rise only when Adrastus, who seems to perform the function of a coryphaeus for them, leads them to the place of the funeral pyre in order to have

<sup>1</sup> Eurip. *Heraclid.* 39-44, 642-645, 656-658.

them carry back the ashes. This is evident from the words which Adrastus addresses to the children as he leads them out (948):

. . . όταν δὲ τοῦσδε προσθῶμεν πυρὶ  
'οστὰ προσάξεσθ' . . .

Near the end of the play (1113-1164), they return with their sad burden, and engage in a pathetic *kommos* with the mothers of the dead until they are interrupted by Theseus.

The preceding examples are found in the extant plays. That Euripides has used a second chorus in other plays also which have not come down to us is made evident by the ancient commentaries. The scholiast on the fifty-eighth verse of the *Hippolytus* informs us that there were such supplementary choruses in at least two other plays, the *Alexandros* and the *Antiope*. In the first, the second chorus consisted of shepherds. In the other, the main chorus was composed of old men of Thebes, whereas the supplementary chorus evidently consisted of young women, attendants of Dirce. That the hymn to the goddess of the chase was sung by the huntsmen themselves in the *Hippolytus* and not by the chorus standing behind the stage is ascertained from the same passage of the scholiast, which explains that the two choruses in the *Antiope* were on the stage at the same time, i. e., the one did not enter after the departure of the other, in which case the same persons might be used for both. To quote the words of the scholiast: ἕτεροί εἰσι τοῦ χοροῦ, καθάπερ ἐν τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ οἱ ποιμένες. Ἐνταῦθα μὲν οὖν δύναται προαποχρήσασθαι τοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ χοροῦ, ἐκεῖ δὲ συνεστῶτος τοῦ χοροῦ ἐπεισάγει τοιοῦτο ἄθροισμα, ὥς καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀντιόπῃ δύο χοροὺς εἰσάγει, τὸν τε τῶν Θηβαίων γερόντων διόλου καὶ τὸν μετὰ Δίρκης.

We cannot, however, say that the novelty of a supplementary chorus belongs to the inventiveness of Euripides. In this as in other bold attempts, the real innovator is Aeschylus. The most interesting example is furnished by the last play of the *Oresteia*. In the *Eumenides*, we not only have a second chorus of Athenian women escorting with dance and song the appeased Furies, but even a third, though mute, chorus of Athenian citizens, who form the reverend court of the Areopagus. Here, it seems, we catch sight of the origin of the second chorus. When the ancient tragic chorus of fifty was discontinued on account of the limitations which expense of outfit and refinement of the lyric and

orchestic art imposed upon the drama, the tragedians divided the original number into four parts of twelve and assigned one to each of the four plays of the tetralogy. Occasionally, however, the chorus of one tragedy were used as mute supernumeraries or were assigned an insignificant part in some other play if the dramatist found fit to do so. The *Eumenides* is an excellent justification of this theory. At least, there can be little doubt that the venerable Areopagites of the trial scene are the old Argives of the *Agamemnon*, and that the women who sing the prosodion at the end are the faithful attendants of Electra in the *Choephoroe*. Thus the very same persons were utilized without even changing their garments or appearance.

In this method then, the master is Aeschylus. Sophocles—so far as we know—did not care to utilize a medium which was evidently intended to titillate the senses through its spectacular effect rather than promote the real art of the drama. But Euripides, the popular poet, eagerly took the artifice from Aeschylus and adorned it with his own fancy, pleasing the citizens of Athens with a spectacle of fifteen huntsmen, or shepherds, or Peloponnesian children in mourning.

## 9. THE HYPORCHEME

### 1. On the Hyporcheme in General

We come, at last, to the most puzzling question of the *hyporcheme*. Authorities differ even in their conception of its nature. What does this lyric or orchestric term that we find in the Greek authors signify? The name itself is criticized as bad by Wilamowitz. In discussing the character and form of the dithyramb, he traces the development of this kind of melic poetry to the time when it abandoned its strophic form and assumed a freer metrical and orchestric movement, about the exact trend of which we neither know nor can know anything. "This," he observes, "is not only true of the dithyramb, but of other songs, too, besides those composed for the Dionysiac cult; the grammarians in default of any special name have designated them as Dance Songs, *ὑπορχήματα*, and arranged them in special books. It is a bad name; because Dance Songs they all are." The same scholar is more impatient in a note attached to the passage just quoted. To use his own



words, "von was die Modernen Hyporchema nennen und zum Beispiel in den Tragikern so bezeichnen, ist nichts weder überliefert noch an sich berechtigt. Die moderne metrische Kabbala ist ganz unerträglich, aber auch das Altertum hat unleidlich viel mit Worten gekrämt, die freilich sehr bequem sind das mangelnde Verständnis zu verhüllen." Numerous, however, is the band of those who take the opposite view, including, among others, Decharme, Walther, Bernhardt, Sommerbrodt, Muff, and Smyth.<sup>1</sup>

Wilamowitz's objection to the name itself does not seem excusable. The word is of a most ancient origin and is supported by no less authority than Plato. In the *Ion* (534B), he observes that each poet is ascribed by divine dispensation a particular gift and can compose well only in his special field ἐφ' ὃ ἡ Μοῦσα αὐτὸν ὥρμησεν, ὃ μὲν διθυράμβους, ὃ δ' ἐγκώμια, ὃ δ' ὑπορχήματα, ὃ δ' ἰάμβους. . . . By Plato's time, then, the word did not only exist but it had become a technical term to designate a particular species of melic song. The verb, however, of the same root, ὑπορχέσθαι, is found first in the *Choephore* of Aeschylus (1025):

. . . πρὸς δὲ καρδίᾳ φόβος  
ἄδειν ἔτοιμος ἢδ' ὑπορχέσθαι κότῳ.

where, as Smyth observes, the antiquity of the word is bespoken by its metaphorical use.<sup>2</sup> Thus, both the word itself ὑπόρχημα, and its technical use come from the very best period of Greek.

Of course, if we interpret the term as songs fit for dance, as Wilamowitz seems to conceive of them when he calls them merely Dance Songs, "Tanzlieder," then the word does not describe the thing adequately. But the preposition ὑπό indicates not only two actions going on at the same time, but two actions of the same kind. Thus the word would designate songs to which at least two orchestric movements, one subject to the other, were adapted. I am aware

<sup>1</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Was ist eine griechische Tragödie*, pp. 73-76, and note 38. Decharme, *Euripide*, etc., p. 494. H. Walther, *Commentatio de Graecorum hyporchematis*. Christian Muff, *Die Chorische Technik des Sophokles*, Halle, 1877, pp. 38-39, 67, 116, 173, 193. H. W. Smyth, *Greek Melic Poets*, Introd., pp. lxx ff. Julius Sommerbrodt, *Scaenica*, Berlin, 1876, pp. 220-222.

<sup>2</sup> See note in Smyth's *Greek Melic Poets*, p. lxx.

that this interpretation comes into direct conflict with much of our ancient tradition, although passages may be quoted in its favor. But the whole question is so confusing that I have thought it safer for myself and fairer for the reader to quote the various conflicting authorities verbatim.

The view that a hyporcheme is a song sung to, or by, a group of persons dancing uniformly is supported by the *Odyssey*, by Athenaeus, by Proclus, and by the grammarian of the *Etymologicum Magnum*. In the eighth book of the *Odyssey* (256-267), we find the first description of this dance song among the Phaeacians:

Ὡς ἔφατ' Ἀλκίνοος θεοείκελος, ὦρτο δὲ κῆρυξ  
οἷσιν φόρμιγγα γλαφυρὴν δόμου ἐκ βασιλῆος.  
αἰσυννῆται δὲ κριταὶ ἐννέα πάντες ἀνέσταν  
δῆμιοι, οἱ κατ' ἀγῶνας ἐν πρήσσεσκον ἕκαστα,  
λείηναν δὲ χορόν, καλὸν δ' εὖρυναν ἀγῶνα.  
κῆρυξ δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων φόρμιγγα λίγειαν  
Δημοδόκῳ. ὃ δ' ἔπειτα κί' ἐς μέσον· ἀμφὶ δὲ κοῦρον  
πρωθῆβαι ἴσταντο, δάημονες ὀρχηθμοῖο,  
πέπληγον δὲ χορὸν θεῖον ποσίν· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς  
μαρμαρυγὰς θηεῖτο ποδῶν, θαύμαζε δὲ θυμῷ.  
αὐτὰρ ὃ φορμίζων ἀνεβάλλετο καλὸν αἰεῖδεν  
'ἀμφ' Ἄρεος φιλότῆτος ἐυστεφάνου τ' Ἀφροδίτης . . .

Such a kind of Dance Song Proclus seems to have in mind when he defines the hyporcheme as "a melody sung with dance" and especially adapted for divine subjects. His division of melic songs according to subject-matter is of particular importance although somewhat puzzling in the light of other evidence:<sup>1</sup> *περὶ δὲ μελικῆς ποιήσεως φησιν ὡς πολυμερεστάτη τε καὶ διαφόρους ἔχει τομὰς. ἃ μὲν γὰρ αὐτοῖς μεμέριται θεοῖς, ἃ δὲ ἀνθρώποις, ἃ δὲ εἰς τὰς προσπιπτούσας περιστάσεις. Καὶ εἰς θεοὺς μὲν ἀναφέρεσθαι ὕμνον, προσόδιον, παιᾶνα, διθύραμβον, νόμον, ἄδωνίδια, ἰόβακχον, ὑπορχήματα . . . (p. 320, 33): ὑπορχημα δὲ τὸ μετ' ὀρχήσεως ᾄδόμενον μέλος ἐλέγετο. Καὶ γὰρ οἱ παλαιοὶ τὴν ὑπὸ ἀντὶ τῆς μετὰ πολλὰκις ἐλάμβανον. Εὐρετὰς δὲ τούτων λέγουσιν οἱ μὲν Κούρητας, οἱ δὲ Πύρρον τὸν Ἀχιλλέως, ὅθεν καὶ πυρρίχην εἶδος τι ὀρχήσεως λέγουσιν. . . .*

<sup>1</sup> Proclus, *Chrestomathy*, in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius, 522. See edition of Immanuel Bekker, Berlin, 1824, p. 319, ll. 32 ff.

A like inference we may draw from the description we find in the *Etymologicum Magnum* under the word προσώδιον: Ἰστέον ὅτι τῶν μελῶν καὶ τῶν ὕμνων τὰ μὲν καλεῖται προσώδια, τὰ δὲ ὑπορχήματα, τὰ δὲ στάσιμα. . . . Ἵπορχήματα δέ, ἅτινα πάλιν ἔλεγον ὀρχούμενοι καὶ τρέχοντες κύκλῳ τοῦ βωμοῦ, καιομένων τῶν ἱερέων . . . ὅτε δὲ περιέτρεχον τὸν βωμόν, ἀπῆσαν πρότερον μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀριστεροῦ μέρους ἐπὶ τὸ δεξιόν, κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ ζωδιακοῦ κύκλου, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς τὴν ἐναντίαν τῷ οὐρανῷ ποιεῖται κίνησιν, ἀπὸ δυσμῶν ἐπὶ ἀνατολὰς φερόμενος. ὕστερον δὲ πάλιν ἀπὸ τοῦ δεξιοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ἀριστερόν ἦσαν κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. τελευταῖον δὲ πάντα τὸν βωμόν περιέτρεχον. Besides the fact that we have here a uniform orchestric movement, it is interesting to note the description of this movement about the altar which suggests a great similarity to many a popular dance of the modern Greeks. The dancers took first a few steps from the left to the right in imitation of the direction of the zodiac, then a few steps from the right to the left in imitation of the movement of the sky, and finally they went about the altar completing a whole circle. In perfect accord with this conception of the hyporcheme is the statement we find in Athenaeus (14, 30, p. 631 C). ἡ δ' ὑπορχηματικὴ ἐστὶν ἐν ᾗ ἄδων ὁ χορὸς ὀρχεῖται.

The other and more plausible view according to which hyporcheme is a *melos* adapted for at least two different orchestric movements, one subordinated to the other, is corroborated by Lucian and by the *Iliad*. Lucian, who certainly was a careful student of the classical period of Greek, in his important essay on *Dance* (16) speaks clearly of two such movements as we have already referred to. "In Delos," he observes, "even the sacrifices are performed with music and dance. Παίδων χοροὶ συνελθόντες ὑπ' αὐλῷ καὶ κιθάρᾳ οἱ μὲν ἐχόρευον, ὑπωρχοῦντο δὲ οἱ ἄριστοι προκριθέντες ἐξ αὐτῶν. Τὰ γοῦν τοῖς χοροῖς γραφόμενα τοῖς ξσμασι ὑπορχήματα ἐκαλεῖτο καὶ ἐμπέπληστο τῶν τοιούτων ἡ λύρα." Stephanus follows the same opinion, as appears from his comments on this passage: "Cum vero Lucianus dicat chorum χορεύσαι and ceteros ὑπορχήσασθαι videtur ὑπορχοῦμαι potius significare choro choreas ducenti quasi subsulto, ut ὑπάδω, praecantori succino; et ὑπορχήματα cantilenae ad quas eius modi chori saltabant." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Steph. *Thes. Ling. Graec.* s.v.

Even more interesting is the famous description from the eighteenth book of the *Iliad* of the shield of Achilles:<sup>1</sup>

Ἐν δὲ χορὸν ποικίλλε περικλυτὸς ἀμφιγυῖης,  
τῷ ἔκελλον οἶόν ποτ' ἐνὶ Κνωσσῷ εὐρείῃ  
Δαίδαλος ἤσκησεν καλλιπλοκάμῳ Ἀριάδνῃ.  
Ἔνθα μὲν ἡῖθεοι καὶ παρθένοι ἀλφεσίβοιαι  
ὠρχεῦντ', ἀλλήλων ἐπὶ καρπῷ χεῖρας ἔχοντες.  
Τῶν δ' αἱ μὲν λεπτὰς ὀθόνας ἔχον, οἱ δὲ χιτῶνας  
εἷατ' ἐνννήτους, ἦκα στίλβοντας ἐλαίῳ.  
καὶ ῥ' αἱ μὲν καλὰς στεφάνας ἔχον, οἱ δὲ μαχαίρας  
εἶχον χρυσείας ἐξ ἀργυρέων τελαμώνων.  
οἱ δ' ὅτε μὲν θρέξασκον ἐπισταμένοισι πόδεσσι  
ρεῖα μάλ', ὥς ὅτε τις τροχὸν ἄρμενον ἐν παλάμῃσιν  
ἐξόμενος κεραμεὺς πειρήσεται, αἱ κε θέσιν,  
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ θρέξασκον ἐπὶ στίχας ἀλλήλοισι.  
πολλοὶ δ' ἱμερόεντα χορὸν περιῖσταθ' ὄμιλος  
τερπόμενοι· δοῖω δὲ κυβιστητῆρε κατ' αὐτοὺς  
μολπῆς ἐξάρχοντες ἐδίνεον κατὰ μέσσοις.

As we see, there are in this dance of Cretan origin three groups of dancers: young men with their golden swords form the first group following, probably, some lively movement of a war-like character; the second group consists of virgins, with diadems on their heads and clothed with fine raiment, whose movement might well have been simpler and of a more tender mood; finally two more skilful artists, serving, as it seems, as leaders, whirled swiftly in their midst, *μολπῆς ἐξάρχοντες ἐδίνεον κατὰ μέσσοις*. From this passage as well as from that in Lucian, we may conclude that the same persons sang and danced at the same time. This, at least, was the more ancient custom. But Lucian informs us in another chapter of the same essay on *Dancing* (30) that this custom was discontinued in later times because the dancing shortened the breath and, therefore, disturbed the singing: *πάλαι μὲν γὰρ οἱ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἦδον καὶ ὠρχοῦντο . εἴτ' ἐπειδὴ κινουμένων τὸ ἀσθμα τὴν ᾠδὴν ἐπετάραττεν, ἄμεινον ἔδοξεν ἄλλους αὐτοῖς ὑπάδειν*. However this may be, it seems more in accordance with the meaning of the word to accept at least two

<sup>1</sup> Hom. *Il.* 18, 590. Cf. G. S. Farnell, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, London, 1891, p. 5, and K. O. Mueller, *Die Dörer*, 1824, i, ch. 8.

varying orchestric movements in the hyporcheme. To reconcile this with the evidence for the mere Dance Song of one uniform movement, we might suppose that the original term was later extended to include Dance Songs of a similar theme although of a single movement. It is worthy of our consideration that the oldest reference to a hyporcheme, which we find in the *Iliad*, supports the theory of a double dance, and that no less an authority on ancient dancing than Lucian corroborates the same theory.

Likewise doubtful is the birthplace of the hyporcheme. Crete and Sparta, Cyprus and even Troy, if we are to give any weight to the story about Pyrrhus, claim its origin. A verse from the second Pythian hymn of Pindar (127) and the explanation offered by the scholiast have been again and again called into court to settle the dispute. Pindar refers to a Castorean song tuned to the Aeolian lyre, which he had sent to Hiero before he composed the second Pythian hymn:

τὸ Καστόρειον  
δ' ἐν Αἰολίδεσσι χορδαῖς  
θέλων ἄθρησον χάριν ἐπτακτύπου  
φόρμιγγος ἀντόμενος.

The scholiast explaining this Castorean song informs us that it is a hyporcheme, and that it is called Castorean because the Dioscuri, according to some, were the inventors of dance. Incidentally, he adds most interesting although somewhat contradictory details about the tradition and nature of the hyporcheme: Τὸν ἐπίνικον ἐπὶ μισθῷ συντάξας ὁ Πίνδαρος ἐκ περιττοῦ συνέγραψεν αὐτῷ πρόδικα ὑπόρχημα οὗ ἡ ἀρχή,

Σύνες ὃ τι λέγω  
ζαθέων ἱερῶν ἐπώνυμε . . .

ὁ δὲ Καστόρειον εἶπε διὰ τὴν ἔνοπλον ὄρχησιν κατ' ἐνίους τοὺς Διοσκούρους εὐρεῖν. Ὁρχηστικοὶ γάρ τινες οἱ Διόσκουροι. Ὁ δὲ Ἐπίχαρμος (in the *Muses* quoted by Athenaeus 4, 184 f.) τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν φησι τοῖς Διοσκούροις τὸν ἐνόπλιον νόμον ἐπαυλῆσαι, ἐξ ἐκείνου δὲ τοὺς Λάκωνας μετ' αὐλοῦ τοῖς πολεμίοις προσιέναι. Τινὲς δὲ ῥυθμόν τινά φασι τὸ Καστόρειον, χρῆσθαι δὲ αὐτῷ τοὺς Λάκωνας ἐν τῇ πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους συμβολῇ. Διέλεκεται δὲ ἡ τῆς πυρρίχης ὄρχησις, πρὸς ἣν τὰ ὑπορχήματα ἐγράφησαν. Ἐνιοὶ μὲν οὖν φασι πρῶτον Κούρητας τὴν ἔνοπλον ὄρχησασθαι ὄρχησιν, αὖθις δὲ

Πύρριχον Κρήτα συντάξασθαι, Θαλήταν δὲ πρῶτον τὰ ἐς αὐτὴν ὑπορχήματα. Σωσίβιος δὲ τὰ ὑπορχηματικά μέλη πάντα Κρητικά λέγεσθαι. "Ἐνιοι δὲ οὐκ ἀπὸ Πυρρίχου τοῦ Κρητὸς τὴν Πυρρίχην ὠνομάσθαι, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ Πύρρου τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως παιδὸς ἐν τῇ Εὐρυπύλου τοῦ Τηλέφου νίκῃ. Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ πρῶτον Ἀχιλλέα ἐπὶ τῇ Πατρόκλου πυρῇ τῇ πυρρίχῃ φησὶ κεκρήσθαι, ἣν παρὰ Κυπρίοις φησὶ πρύλιν λέγεσθαι, ὥστε παρὰ τὴν πυρὰν τῆς πυρρίχης τὸ ὄνομα θέσθαι. . . . Thus in the same passage four different opinions are given and various authorities are quoted, among them Pindar, Sosibius, Epicharmus, and even Aristotle.

Athenaeus evidently believes Sparta to be the place of origin of the hyporcheme. This, at least, may be inferred from his remarks on hyporchematic dancing (14, 30, p. 631C): ὁρχοῦνται δὲ ταύτην παρὰ τῷ Πινδάρῳ οἱ Λάκωνες, καὶ ἐστὶν ὑπορχηματικὴ ὄρχησις ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν, and from his quotation of the Epicharmean passage already noted by the Pindaric scholiast:<sup>1</sup> καὶ τὴν Ἀθηναῶν δὲ φησιν Ἐπίχαρμος ἐπαυλῆσαι τοῖς Διοσκόροις τὸν ἐνόπλιον.

It is, however, most probable that the country of the hyporcheme is Crete. To this conclusion we are led by most of the ancient testimonies which have come down to us and also by the Pindaric scholion. From the latter, we learn that Sosibius believed all hyporchematic songs to be Cretan, and that, according to some traditional evidence, Pyrrichus, likewise a Cretan, is accredited with the invention of the hyporcheme. To this we may add: the dance description from the *Iliad*, which points again to a Cretan origin and cites Cnossus as the birthplace and Daedalus as the first master; also the tradition preserved by Proclus,<sup>2</sup> according to which the Cretan Couretes are given as the inventors; and the statement of Athenaeus himself in the fourth book (4, 10, p. 181B), in which he gives various authorities for the Cretan origin in contradiction of the passages quoted above:

τοῖς μὲν οὖν Κρησὶν ἢ τε ὄρχησις ἐπιχώριος καὶ  
τὸ κυβιστᾶν. Διὸ φησι πρὸς τὸν Κρήτα Μηριόνην. (Π 617)

Μηριόνη, τάχα κέν σε καὶ ὄρχηστήν περ ὄντα  
ἔγχος ἐμόν κατέπαυσε διαμπερές, εἰ σ' ἔβαλόν περ.

<sup>1</sup> Athen. 4, p. 184 f. Cf. Aug. O. Fr. Lorenz, *Leben und Schriften des Koers Epicharmus*, Berlin, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> Proclus, *Chrestom.* in Phot. *Biblioth.*, ed. Bekker, p. 239.

ὅθεν καὶ Κρητικά καλοῦσι τὰ ὑπορχήματα. (Simon. fr. 31)  
 Κρήτα μὲν καλέουσι τρόπον, τὸ δ'  
 ὄργανον Μολοσσόν.

This passage is of particular value inasmuch as it adds evidence from as ancient and reliable authority as Simonides, who himself was a poet of hyporchemes. Finally, we must quote the pertinent comments of Eustathius on the dance described in the *Iliad* (18, 590) which point to Crete as the place where men and women first danced together: ὅτι τῆς ὀρχήσεως εἰς δύο εἶδη διηρημένης εἷς τε τὸ ἐνόπλιον, ὃ τῇ πυρρίχῃ καὶ Κουρητικῇ κινήσει ἀπέκασται, καὶ εἰς τὸ Ἰλιω, ὃ πρέπον ἐστὶν εἰρήνῃ κατὰ τὰ βακχικὰ σχήματα, ἐνταῦθα ὁ ποιητὴς ἀμφότερα παραδείκνυσι. . . . Σημείωσαι δὲ ὅτι τῶν ῥηθέντων δύο εἰδῶν ὀρχήσεως, ἡγουν τοῦ ἐνόπλιου καὶ τοῦ Ἰλιω, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὁ ποιητὴς ἐνταῦθα διὰ τῶν μαχαιροφόρων παίδων ἐνδείκνυται, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον διὰ τῶν παρθένων, αἱ καλὰς εἶχον στεφάνας. Φασὶ δὲ οἱ παλαιοὶ ὅτι διακεχωρισμένως χορεύοντων τὸ πρὶν ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν πρῶτοι οἱ μετὰ Θησέως σωθέντες ἐκ τοῦ Λαβυρινθοῦ ἑπτὰ ἡῖθεοι καὶ τοσαῦται παρθένοι ἀναμῖξ ἐχόρευσαν ὑπὸ καθηγητῇ τῷ Δαιδάλῳ κατὰ Κνωσσόν, πόλιν Κρήτης, περὶ ἧς ἀλλαχοῦ τε καὶ ἐν τοῖς τοῦ περιηγητοῦ δὲ ἐρρέθη, ἀφ' ἧς καὶ τὰ Κνώσσια παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ ὀρχήματα (Aj. 699).

We may, therefore, with safety accept Crete and the Cretan city of Cnossus as the birthplace of the hyporcheme. Thence it travelled across the sea and about the seventh century before Christ it was transferred to Sparta by a Cretan, the Gortynian Thaletas, who was the first to compose hyporchemes for the Spartans. Then it spread over the whole of Peloponnesus and reached as far as the Aeolian city of Thebes. Its highest development was attained in the age of Pindar and Xenodamus, according to Eustathius.<sup>1</sup> The first was a Theban whose fame filled the whole of the Hellenic world, the other was a Cytherean, who spent his life in Sparta. It was a Peloponnesian of the city of Phlius, the melic and dramatic poet Pratinas, who brought this melic form to Athens. Plutarch lends his authority to this tradition by what he says in his essay on *Music*:<sup>2</sup> ἡ μὲν οὖν πρώτη κατάστασις τῶν περὶ τὴν μουσικὴν ἐν τῇ Σπάρτῃ,

<sup>1</sup> Eustath. *Commentary on Odyssey*, 8, 264.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia*, ed. Bernardakis, Leipzig, 1895, vi, p. 495.

Τερπάνδρου καταστήσαντος, γέγενηται· τῆς δευτέρας δὲ Θαλήτας τε ὁ Γορτύνιος καὶ Ξενόδομος ὁ Κυθήριος καὶ Ξενόκριτος ὁ Λοκρὸς καὶ Πολύμνηστος ὁ Κολοφώνιος, καὶ Σακάδας ὁ Ἀργεῖος μάλιστα αἰτίαν ἔχουσιν ἡγεμόνες γενέσθαι. Τούτων γὰρ εἰσηγησαμένων τὰ περὶ τὰς γυμνοπαιδίας τὰς ἐν Λακεδαίμονι λέγεται κατασταθῆναι, τὰ περὶ τὰς ἀποδείξεις τὰς ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ, τῶν τε ἐν Ἀργεὶ τὰ ἐνδύματα καλούμενα. Ἦσαν δ' οἱ περὶ Θαλήταν τε καὶ Ξενόδομον καὶ Ξενόκριτον ποιηταὶ παιάνων, οἱ δὲ περὶ Πολύμνηστον τῶν ὀρθίων καλουμένων, οἱ δὲ περὶ Σακάδαν ἐλεγείων. Ἄλλοι δὲ Ξενόδομον ὑπορχημάτων ποιητὴν γεγονέναι καὶ οὐ παιάνων, καθάπερ Πρατίνας. Καὶ αὐτοῦ δὲ τοῦ Ξενόδομου ἀπομνημονεύεται ἄσμα, ὃ ἐστὶ φανερώς ὑπόρχημα. Κέχρηται δὲ τῷ γένει τῆς ποιήσεως ταύτης Πίνδαρος. ὁ δὲ παιὰν ὅτι διαφορὰν ἔχει πρὸς τὰ ὑπορχήματα, τὰ Πινδάρου ποιήματα δηλώσει· γέγραφε γὰρ καὶ παιᾶνας καὶ ὑπορχήματα.

The question of the nature and character of the hyporcheme is even a more difficult one to determine, and the difficulty is increased by the importance of the issue involved. Through the conflicting testimonies of antiquity, we must reach a definite idea as to what the hyporcheme really is and as to its admissibility to the tragic choral parts. Indeed, if we are to trust Athenaeus and his division of the various kinds of dances, we must distinguish three different dramatic dances, the tragic, the comic, and the satyric, from the lyric dances, which are the gymnopaedic, the pyrrhic, and the hyporchematic. The same author, comparing the two classes, places the tragic dance, which he also calls *emmeleia* beside the gymnopaedic; the pyrrhic beside the satyric; and the comic, which he also calls *cordax*, beside the hyporchematic. The last two, he observes, are playful (Athen. 14, 28, p. 630C): συνέστηκε δὲ καὶ σατυρική πᾶσα ποίησις τὸ παλαιὸν ἐκ χορῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡ τότε τραγωδία. διόπερ οὐδὲ ὑποκριτὰς εἶχον. Τρεῖς δ' εἰσι τῆς σκηνικῆς ποιήσεως ὀρχήσεις: τραγική, κωμική, σατυρική· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τῆς λυρικῆς ποιήσεως ὀρχήσεις τρεῖς: πυρρίχη, γυμνοπαιδική, ὑπορχηματική. Καὶ ἔστιν ὁμοία ἡ μὲν πυρρίχη τῇ σατυρικῇ· ἀμφοτέραι γὰρ διὰ τάχους· πολεμική δὲ δοκεῖ εἶναι ἡ πυρρίχη· ἔνοπλοι γὰρ αὐτὴν παῖδες ὀρχοῦνται. Τάχους δὲ δεῖ τῷ πολέμῳ εἰς τὸ διώκειν καὶ εἰς τὸ ἡττωμένους φεύγειν μὴδὲ μένειν μὴδ' αἰδεῖσθαι κακοῦς εἶναι (orac. Herod. 1, 55). Ἡ δὲ γυμνοπαιδικὴ παρεμφερὴς ἐστὶ τῇ τραγικῇ ὀρχήσει, ἥτις ἐμμέλεια καλεῖται· ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ δὲ ὁρᾶται τὸ βαρὺ καὶ σεμνόν. Ἡ δ' ὑπορχηματικὴ τῇ κωμικῇ οἰκείουται, ἥτις καλεῖται



κόρδαξ. Παιγνιώδεις δ' εἰσὶν ἀμφότεραι . . . (p. 631 C) Ἀριστόξενος δὲ φησιν (FH G. 2, 284) ὡς οἱ παλαιοὶ γυμναζόμενοι πρῶτον ἐν τῇ γυμνοπαιδικῇ εἰς τὴν πυρρίχην ἐχώρουν πρὸ τοῦ εἰσιέναι εἰς τὸ θέατρον. Καλεῖται δ' ἡ πυρρίχη καὶ χειρονομία. Ἡ δ' ὑπορχηματική ἐστιν ἐν ᾗ ἄδων ὁ χορὸς ὀρχεῖται· φησὶ γοῦν ὁ Βακχυλίδης (Fr. 23 B 4). οὐχ ἔδρας ἔργον οὐδ' ἀμβολᾶς. καὶ Πίνδαρος δὲ φησιν (Fr. 112 B 4):

Λάκαινα μὲν παρθένων ἀγέλα.

Ὅρχονται δὲ ταύτην παρὰ τῷ Πινδάρῳ οἱ Λάκωνες, καὶ ἔστιν ὑπορχηματική ὄρχησις ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν. . . .

According to this testimony not only must we banish the hyporcheme from tragedy but we must consider tragic and hyporchematic dances as two very dissimilar things. Certainly the gravity and dignity of the tragic dance cannot be reconciled with the playfulness and lightness that are attributed by the same author both to the hyporcheme and to the licentious cordax. But with that exuberant inconsistency which is one of the characteristics of Athenaeus, we find our author contradicting himself in another passage where he confesses that the hyporcheme, so far from being licentious, is full of nobility and manly dignity, and fitting to be danced by men of free birth (14, 25, p. 628 C): καὶ πρὸς γυμνασίαν δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἄλλης διανοίας συμβάλλεται ἡ μουσική . . . οὐ κακῶς δ' ἔλεγον οἱ περὶ Δάμωνα τὸν Ἀθηναῖον ὅτι καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ τὰς ὀρχήσεις ἀνάγκη γίνεσθαι κινουμένης πως τῆς ψυχῆς· καὶ αἱ μὲν ἐλευθέριοι καὶ καλὰ ποιοῦσι τοιαύτας, αἱ δὲ ἐναντία τὰς ἐναντίας . . . καὶ γὰρ ἐν ὀρχήσει καὶ πορείᾳ καλὸν μὲν εὐσχημοσύνη καὶ κόσμος, αἰσχροὺς δὲ ἀταξία καὶ φορτικόν· διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς συνέταττον οἱ ποιηταὶ τοῖς ἐλευθεροῖς τὰς ὀρχήσεις καὶ ἐχώρουν τοῖς σχήμασι σημείοις μόνον τῶν ἀδομένων, τηροῦντες αἰὲν τὸ εὐγενὲς καὶ ἀνδρῶδες ἐπ' αὐτῶν, ὅθεν καὶ ὑπορχήματα τὰ τοιαῦτα προσηγόρευον. Εἰ δέ τις ἀμέτρως διαθείη τὴν σχηματοποιίαν καὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐπιτυγχάνων μηδὲν λέγει κατὰ τὴν ὄρχησιν, οὗτος ἦν ἀδόκιμος. Διὸ καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης ἢ Πλάτων ἐν ταῖς Σκευαῖς, ὡς Χαμαιλέων φησὶν (fr. 28 K), εἴρηκεν οὕτως (636 K):

ὥστ' εἴ τις ὀρχοῖτ' εὐ θέαμα ἦν· νῦν δὲ δρῶσιν οὐδέν,  
ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀπόπληκτοι στάδην ἐστῶτες ὠρύονται.

Ἦν γὰρ τὸ τῆς ὀρχήσεως γένος τῆς ἐν τοῖς χοροῖς εὐσχημον τότε καὶ μεγαλοπρεπὲς καὶ ὡσανεὶ τὰς ἐν τοῖς ὀπλοῖς κινήσεις ἀπομιμούμενον.

"Ὅθεν καὶ Σωκράτης ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασι τοὺς κάλλιστα χορεύοντας ἀρίστους φησὶν εἶναι τὰ πολέμια λέγων οὕτως (II, 287 B<sup>4</sup>):

οἱ δὲ χοροῖς κάλλιστα θεοὺς τιμῶσιν ἄριστοι ἐν πολέμῳ.

More consistently and with a better knowledge of the subject speaks Plutarch in the ninth book of his *Symposiac Problems* (chap. 15, p. 748A). The Chaeronean writer emphasizes the mimetic nature of the hyporcheme, so that what Simonides had said about the art of painting, he applies to dancing by calling dancing silent poetry, and poetry speaking dance. Moreover, he observes, the metrical movement of the hyporchematic songs is so rapid that even reading the words invites the hands and feet of the reader to dance. To prove this, he quotes from some hyporchemes by Simonides, whom he considers the master of this form of melic poetry. The passage is of great value for our knowledge of the ancient orchestric art and is worthy of quotation: καὶ ὅλως ἔφη μεταθήσειν τὸ Σιμωνίδειον ἀπὸ τῆς ζωγραφίας ἐπὶ τὴν ὄρχησιν· ποίησιν γὰρ εἶναι τὴν ὄρχησιν σιωπῶσαν, καὶ φθεγγομένην ὄρχησιν πάλιν τὴν ποίησιν· ὅθεν εἶπεν οὔτε γραφικῇ μετεῖναι ποιητικῆς οὔτε ποιητικῇ γραφικῆς, οὐδὲ χρῶνται τὸ παράπαν ἀλλήλαις. Ὅρχηστικῇ δὲ καὶ ποιητικῇ κοινωνία πᾶσα καὶ μέτεξι ἀλλήλων ἐστί, καὶ μάλιστα μιμούμεναι περὶ τὸ ὑπορχημάτων γένος ἐνεργὸν ἀμφοτέραι τὴν διὰ τῶν σχημάτων καὶ ὀνομάτων μίμησιν ἀποτελοῦσι. Δόξειε δ' ἂν ὥσπερ ἐν γραφικῇ τὰ μὲν ποιήματα τοῖς χρώμασιν εὐκέναι τὰ δ' ὀρχήματα ταῖς γραμμαῖς, ὅφ' ὧν ὀρίζεται τὰ εἶδη. Δηλοῖ δ' ὁ μάλιστα κατωρθωκέναι δόξας 'ἐν ὑπορχήμασι καὶ γεγενέαι πιθανώτατος ἑαυτοῦ τὸ δεῖσθαι τὴν ἑτέραν τῆς ἑτέρας· τὸ γὰρ

ἀπέλαστον ἵππον ἢ κύνα

Ἄμυκλαίαν ἀγωνίῳ

ἐλελιζόμενος ποδὶ μίμεο καμπύλον μέλος διώκων.

ἢ τὸ

οἶος ἀνὰ Δώτιον ἀνθεμόεν πεδίον

πέταται θάνατον κερόεσσα τε

εὐρέμεν ματεύων ἐλάφῳ

τὰν δ' ἐπ' αὐχένι στρέφοισαν ἕτερον κᾶρα πάντ' ἐπ'

οἶμον . . .

καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς μονοῦν λειόθεν τὴν ἐν ὀρχήσει διάθεσιν τὰ ποιήματα καὶ παρακαλεῖν τῷ χεῖρει καὶ τῷ πόδε, μᾶλλον δ' ὅλον ὥσπερ τισὶ μῆρινθοις ἔλκειν τὸ σῶμα τοῖς μέλεσι καὶ ἐντείνειν, τούτων δὲ λεγομένων καὶ ἄδομένων

ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν μὴ δυναμένοις. Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἑαυτὸν οὐκ αἰσχύνεται περὶ τὴν ὀρχησιν οὐχ ἦττον ἢ τὴν ποίησιν ἐγκωμιάζων,

ὅπα δὲ γαρῦσαι

σύν τ' ἐλαφρὸν ὀρχημ' αἰοιδᾷ ποδῶν μιγνύμεν·

Κρητὰ μιν καλέουσι τρόπον, τὸ δ' ὄργανον Μολοσσόν.

It was this passage, it seems, that convinced Budaëus to accept ὑπορχεῖσθαι and προσχηματοποιεῖσθαι as synonyms, and to interpret σχηματοποιεῖσθαι as “gesticulationi servire, vel schemata saltationis cuiusque imitari.”<sup>1</sup> This mimetic and interpretative character of the hyporcheme is also recognized by Eustathius in his commentary on the description of the dance among the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey* (8,264): Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι δοκοῦσιν ἐνταῦθα οἱ ὀρχοῦμενοι πρωθῆβαι πρὸς ᾧδὴν ὀρχεῖσθαι τὴν τοῦ Δημοδόκου· ὃ δὴ καὶ ἐν τῇ κατὰ τὴν Ἰλιάδα ὀπλοποιία φαίνεται. Κιθαρίζοντος γὰρ ἐκεῖ παιδὸς χαίρουσιν ἄλλοι μολπῇ καὶ ὀρχηθμῷ. Ἐν οἷς ὑποσημαίνεται φασὶ τὸ ὑπορχηματικὸν εἶδος, ἀνθῆσαν ἐπὶ Ξενοδήμου καὶ Πινδάρου. Ἔστι δέ, φασιν, ἡ τοιαύτη ὀρχησις μίμησις τῶν ὑπὸ τῆς λέξεως ἐρμηνευομένων πραγμάτων. Ἡ παρίστησις Ξενοφῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀναβάσει ὀρχήσεις ἱστορῶν σὺν ὅπλοις καὶ ἄλματα ὑψηλὰ καὶ κοῦφα καὶ μετὰ μαχαιρῶν. Ἐναρμόνια δηλαδὴ καὶ αὐτὰ ὁποῖα καὶ τὰ τῶν ἐνταῦθα βηταρμόνων. Ὡν τῆς ἀρετῆς παράδειγμα καὶ Τελέστης ὀρχηστῆς, φασιν, Αἰσχύλου, οὗτω τεχνίτης, ὥστε ἐν τῷ ὀρχεῖσθαι τοὺς Ἐπτά ἐπὶ Θήβας φανερά ποιῆσαι τὰ πράγματα δι' ὀρχήσεως. Ὅτι δὲ ἡ ὀρχησις ἐσπουδάζετο ποτε, δηλοῦσι καὶ οἱ περιεγόμενοι ὀρχηστοδιδάσκαλοι, καὶ οἱ ζηλώσαντες αὐτὴν σοφοί. Σοφοκλῆς οὖν καλός, φασί, τὴν ὥραν γινόμενος, δεδίδακτο ἐξ ἑτι παίδων καὶ ὀρχηστικὴν καὶ μουσικὴν. καὶ Σωκράτης δὲ πολλάκις ἐν τῷ καταλαμβάνεσθαι ὀρχοῦμενος ἔλεγε τοῖς γνωρίμοις, παντὸς εἶναι μέρους τὴν ὀρχησιν γυμνάσιον.

After a diligent examination of the preceding ancient testimonies, we may assert with certainty that the nature of the hyporcheme was essentially mimetic, and that its verses were composed in so rapidly moving rhythm that both song and dance rendered the moods of the participants restless and impatient. Religious fervor, exuberant joy, and intense fear or other exciting passion might be the cause of this restlessness and impatience. Consequently, there must have been many hyporchemes which on

<sup>1</sup> See Stephanus, *Thesaurus Ling. Graec.* s.v. ὑπορχέομαι.

account of exuberant playfulness resulting from extreme or unexpected joy could be compared in their violence of movement and mood to the comic dance cordax. For there is no doubt that the cordax deserves fully the appellation given to it by Athenaeus *παιγνιώδης*. But it does not follow from this that all hyporchemes were of jesting lightness and inconsistent with the dignity of a tragic chorus. Restlessness and impatience, as we have seen, are the result not only of joy but of fear and of any other passion as well. It was this realm of passion in its light and somber aspects that the ancient poets entered to make an emotion fit for hyporchematic expression. That solicitude and concern of the most serious sort could be made a theme for a hyporcheme is proved by the famous hyporcheme of Pindar, which though mutilated, is sufficiently clear as to its subject-matter, mood, and form. The poet in awe at the eclipse of the sun, fears lest some calamity overwhelm Thebes, his native city, and prays to the Sun-god to avert the evil from his people (fr. 107):

Ἄκτις Ἀελίου, τί πολύσκοπε μήσσαι, ὦ μήτερ ὀμμάτων;  
 ἄστρον ὑπέρτατον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κλεπτόμενον,  
 ἔθηκας ἀμάχανον ἰσχὺν  
 πτανὸν ἀνδράσι καὶ σοφίας ὁδόν·  
 ἐπίσκοπον ἀτραπὸν ἐσσυμένα  
 ἐλαύνεις τι νεώτερον ἢ πάρος;  
 ἀλλὰ σε πρὸς Διὸς ἱππους ζαθέας ἱκετεύω  
 ἀπήμον' ἐς οἶμόν τινα τράποις Θήβαις,  
 ὦ πότνια πάγκοινον τέρας.  
 Πολέμου δ' εἰ σᾶμα φέρεις τινός,  
 ἢ καρποῦ φθίσιν, ἢ νικητοῦ σθένος  
 ὑπέρφατον, ἢ στάσιν οὐλομένην,  
 ἢ πόντου κενέωσιν ἅμ' πέδον,  
 ἢ παγετὸν χθονός, ἢ νότιον θέρος  
 ὕδατι ζακότῳ διερόν,  
 ἢ γαῖαν κατακλύσαισα θήσεις  
 ἀνδρῶν νέον ἐξ ἀρχῆς γένος,  
 ὀλοφύρομαι οὐδέν, ὅτι πάντων μέτα πείσομαι.

The great majority of the hyporchemes were evidently composed in honor of various gods and especially of Apollo. In this belief we are assured by the testimonies of Menander and Proclus,

the rhetoricians. We have already cited Proclus,<sup>1</sup> who in his *Chrestomathy* quoted by Photius informs us that of the melic forms of poetry the hymn, the dithyramb, the nome, the adonidion, the iobacchus, and the hyporcheme were composed in honor of gods only. Menander, on the other hand, is more specific, and using hymn as a general term of all melic song addressed to gods, he sets paeans and hyporchemes as especially adapted to Apollo's cult:<sup>2</sup> *καὶ τούτους αὖ —τοὺς ὕμνους— διαιροῦμεν κατὰ θεὸν ἕκαστον· τοὺς μὲν γὰρ εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα Παιᾶνας καὶ Ὑπορχήματα νομίζομεν, τοὺς δὲ εἰς Διόνυσον Διθυράμβους καὶ Ἰοβάκχους, καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα εἴρηται Διονύσου, τοὺς δὲ εἰς Ἀφροδίτην Ἑρωτικούς.* To the Apolline cult they seem to be ascribed by Lucian, too, whose passage on the hyporchemes sung and danced by boys during the sacrifices at Delos we have already quoted at the beginning of this chapter.<sup>3</sup> Nor can we draw a different conclusion from the hyporchematic allusions found in Callimachus' second hymn to Apollo.<sup>4</sup> But there is sufficient evidence that the hyporcheme was not limited exclusively to Apollo. We have already quoted the Pindaric fragment addressed to Helios. In another fragment, Bacchylides (fr. 23) appeals to Athena in hyporchematic numbers. Pindar composed a hyporcheme even in honor of a man, Hiero of Syracuse, which we have seen referred to as "the Castorean song" in the second Pythian hymn (127).

The instrument used for accompaniment in the hyporcheme was originally the lyre. It is the only instrument referred to by

<sup>1</sup> Proclus, *Chrestom.* in Phot. *Biblioth.*, p. 522, ed. Bekker, Berlin, 1824, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> Walz, *Rhetor. Graec.*, Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1836, ix, p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *De Saltat.* 16.

<sup>4</sup> Callim. *Hymns*, 2, 11 ff.:

ὀφόμεθ', ὦ Ἑκάεργε, καὶ ἐσσόμεθ' οὐποτε λιτοί·  
μήτε σιωπηλὴν κίθαριν μήτ' ἄψοφον ἶχνος  
τοῦ Φοίβου τοὺς παῖδας ἔχεν ἐπιδημήσαντος,  
εἰ τελείν μελλοῦσι γάμον πολὴν τε κυρεῖσθαι,  
ἐστήξειν δὲ τὸ τεῖχος ἐπ' ἀρχαίοισι θεμέλοις.  
ἡγασάμην τοὺς παῖδας, ἐπεὶ χέλυς οὐκέτ' ἀεργός.  
εὐφημεῖτ' ἄλλοντες ἐπ' Ἀπόλλωνος ἀοιδῇ.  
εὐφημεῖ καὶ πόντος, ὅτε κλείουσιν ἀοιδοὶ  
ἢ κίθαριν ἢ τόξα, Λυκωρέος ἔντεα Φοίβου . . .

Homer in the dance descriptions we have previously examined. But soon the flute travelled from Asia across the Aegean and at the time of Thaletas it was established in Sparta, whence it passed to other Peloponnesian cities, and by the end of the sixth century it had invaded Athens. We have already noted how tradition makes Athena initiate the Dioscuri into the secrets of flute music. In Athens, it was first used to accompany the Dionysiac dances in the days of Pratinas to the disgust of that poet, who even wrote a hyporcheme in which he violently attacked the novel instrument and defended the rights of the time-honored lyre (fr. I, Bergk, iii, 558):

Τίς ὁ θόρυβος ὄδε; τί τάδε τὰ χορεύματα;  
 τίς ὕβρις ἔμολεν ἐπὶ Διονυσιάδα πολυπάταγα θυμέλαν;  
 ἔμός, ἔμός ὁ Βρόμιος· ἐμέ δέϊ κελαδεῖν, ἐμέ δέϊ παταγεῖν  
 ἄν' ὄρεα σύμενον μετὰ Ναϊάδων  
 οἷά τε κύκνον ἄγοντα ποικιλόπτερον μέλος.  
 τὰν ἀοιδὰν κατέστησε Πιερίς βασιλείαν· ὁ δ' αὐλὸς  
 ὕστερον χορευέτω· καὶ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὑπηρέτας  
 κώμῳ μόνον θυραμάχοις τε πυγμαχίαισι νέων θέλει παροίνων  
 ἔμμεναι στρατηλάτας.  
 παῖε τὸν φρυνίου  
 ποικίλου πνοὰν ἔχοντα·  
 φλέγε τὸν ὀλεσιοκάλαμον,  
 λαλοβαρυόπα παραμελορυθμοβάταν θ',  
 ὑπαὶ τρυπάνῳ δέμας πεπλασμένον·  
 ἦν ἰδοῦ· ἄδε σοι δεξιὰ  
 καὶ ποδὸς διαρριφά, θριαμβοδιθύραμβε·  
 κισσόχαιτ' ἄναξ, ἄκουε τὰν ἐμὰν Δούριον χορείαν . . .<sup>1</sup>

His wrath, however, was spent in vain. The flute not only established itself permanently, but it was reconciled with the lyre, in common with which it accompanied many a dance and song. Thus, according to the testimony of Simonides himself, Plutarch's unexcelled master of the hyporcheme, the cretic measure and a ruder form of the flute, which the poet calls molossus were most fitting for that kind of melic form. Likewise, we have seen Lucian testify that in Delos the boys danced and sang to the accompaniment of both flute and lyre.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the text see H. W. Smyth, *Greek Melic Poets*, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> See passages quoted above, pp. 146, 153. Plutarch, *Sympos. Probl.* 748. Lucian, *De Saltat.* 16.

2. *The Hyporcheme in Tragedy*

Thus far we have discussed the hyporcheme apart from its relation to tragedy. It remains now to approach the more difficult and more elusive question whether this melic form is found at all in the tragic poets. We have already seen how impatiently Wilamowitz rejects this theory. Yet if our conclusion about the nature and character of the hyporcheme is true, its total absence from tragedy would be by far more surprising than its appearance. Again and again in various tragedies we come upon a dramatic situation in which the chorus is forced through restlessness and impatience to sing in rapid rhythm and dance in a movement with the mimetic element predominant. It is true that we have not a single ancient testimony referring directly to a hyporcheme in the tragic drama. But we must consider that ancient testimonies about the hyporcheme are altogether scarce and inadequate, as we have had opportunity to see from the quotations we have collected. It would be, therefore, highly improbable that in this scarcity of evidence we have even the essential facts with regard to the history and influence of this melic form. One thing, however, is absolutely certain. All ancient references to the hyporcheme show most clearly that it was a very common dance song used for a great variety of themes and occasions and, to speak in the words of Lucian (*De Saltat.* 16), "lyric poetry was full" of such songs, ἐμπέπληστο τῶν τοιούτων ἡ λύρα. From Lucian and Plutarch as well as from Athenaeus and Eustathius we gather the same impression in spite of the indefiniteness and negligence of statement. As a matter of fact, this very indefiniteness is a proof of the wide spread of the hyporcheme. It is natural, when we refer to something commonly known to limit ourselves to mere allusions which are sufficient to meet the understanding of the general public. It would, however, be worth our labors if we endeavored to find some foothold through this vagueness and obscurity of the ancient testimonies.

In the first place, when Athenaeus (14, 630D) names three modes of dancing as appertaining to the stage, the tragic, the comic, and the satyric, he does not give us an exhaustive or even a compre-

hensive and distinct classification. It is not probable, and we have good reason to doubt that there was only one kind of tragic or comic or satyric dance. Of course, we hear often of the tragic emmeleia, of the comic cordax, and of the satyric sikinnis. But that they were not the only kinds of dance used on the stage, is made clear by Lucian's statement in the twenty-second chapter of his essay on *Dancing*: Τὰ μὲν γὰρ Διονυσιακὰ καὶ Βακχικὰ οἶμαί σε μὴ περιμένειν ἐμοῦ ἀκοῦσαι ὅτι ὄρχησις πάντα ἦν· τριῶν γὰρ οὐσῶν τῶν γενικωτάτων ὀρχήσεων, κόρδακος, καὶ σικιννίδος, καὶ ἐμμελείας, οἱ Διονύσου θεράποντες οἱ Σάτυροι ταύτας ἐφευρόντες ἀφ' ἐαυτῶν ἐκάστην ὠνόμασαν. Thus the emmeleia, cordax, and sikinnis were not the only kinds of Dionysiac dance, but the most usual ones, and, therefore, it would be quite possible to find some other kind of dance in the drama not included among the above-named three kinds.

Moreover, we have at least one testimony to the effect that the hyporcheme was used in tragedy. Eustathius<sup>1</sup> in his commentary on the dance description of the *Odyssey* believes that the dance in question is hyporchematic and goes on to give a definition and examples of this kind of dance. "This dance," he says, "is an imitation of the things expressed through the words." Then he gives as an example of a perfect dancer of this kind, the Aeschylean actor Telestes, "who was such an artist that when he danced the *Seven Against Thebes* he made the action clear through mere dancing." But we may even cite Aeschylus and Sophocles as corroborating our theory. It is certain that Aeschylus understood well what a hyporcheme was when he conceived of "fear singing and dancing in company with anger" ὑπορχεῖσθαι κῶτῳ (*Choeph.* 1025). Even more important is the authority of Sophocles, who, just as Simonides calls the hyporcheme Κρήτα τρόπον, makes Ajax's sailors dance "self-taught Nysian and Cnossian dances," a fact which did not escape the attention of Eustathius in his commentary on the dance of the *Iliad*.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, every sign is in favor of accepting the joyful song of the sailors as a hyporcheme: the dancers are rendered impatient and restless by passing unexpectedly from grief to extreme joy; the rhythm of their song moves in

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey*, 8, 264; see p. 145 above.

<sup>2</sup> Eustath. *Il.* 18, 590; see pp. 147 and 150 above.



rapid and excited measure; their dance is swift and boisterous; the gods appealed to are Pan, the Arcadian, and above all Apollo, the Delian, the very patron of the hyporcheme. But let us look at the words themselves (*Aj.* 693):

ΧΟ. Ἐφριξ' ἔρωτι, περιχαρῆς δ' ἀνεπτάμαν ἰὼ ἰὼ Πάν, Πάν,  
 ὦ Πάν Πάν ἀλίπλαγκτε Κυλλανίας χιονοκτύπου  
 πετραίας ἀπὸ δειράδος φάνηθ', ὦ θεῶν χοροποι' ἄναξ,  
 ὅπως μοι Νύσια Κνώσι' ὀρχήματ' αὐτοδαῆ ξυνὼν ἰάψῃς.  
 Νῦν γὰρ ἐμοὶ μέλει χορεύσαι.  
 Ἰκαρίων δ' ὑπὲρ πελαγέων μολῶν ἄναξ Ἀπόλλων ὁ Δάλιος εὐγνωστος  
 ἐμοὶ ξυνείη διὰ παντὸς εὐφρων . . .

Here is certainly an example of a tragic hyporcheme fairly supported by internal and external evidence from Sophocles himself according to Eustathius. From this sure foothold may we not look more safely for other examples?

Let us return to Aeschylus. Of the three tragedians, he alone has been unanimously stripped of the hyporchematic form. Yet Eustathius most definitely cites the Aeschylean actor Telestes as an unexcelled dancer of this very kind of mimetic dance, and tells us that he danced the *Septem* with such consummate skill that he made the action clear through his dancing. Aside from this evidence, the signs of the hyporchematic mood in the *Septem*, the *Prometheus*, the *Choephoroe*, and the *Eumenides*, are, I believe, unmistakable. In the first play, the chorus of Theban women, as they enter or rather as they rush panic-stricken on the stage, sing and dance what corresponds in every respect to a hyporcheme. Overwhelmed with agony and fear, they gather in rapidly moving measures from all directions, and dancing in unrestrained restlessness they run to the gates of the walls to see how the affairs of their native city stand. What they sing is especially adapted to imitative dance. From the beginning to the end of the song every verse is full of the clamor of war. We can almost hear the galloping of horses, the clanging and clashing of shield and spear, and see the clouds of dust enveloping the flying riders. Swept away by their fearful imaginings, the women wave their hands, sway their bodies, and move their feet, — living pictures of what they

imagine they see. The dochmiac metre, in which they sing, with its restless movement and thirty various forms is particularly illustrative of the hyporchematic restlessness and not very far from the cretic rhythm which was the original rhythm of the hyporcheme. Thus with the resolution of one long syllable into two short, whether we have  $\cup \text{—} \cup \text{—} \cup \text{—}$ ,  $\cup - \cup \cup \cup -$ , or  $\cup \cup \cup \text{—} \cup \text{—}$ , we have, by right division, a cretic rhythm  $\cup \text{—} | \text{—} \cup \text{—}$ ,  $\cup \text{—} | \cup \cup \cup \text{—}$ , or  $\cup \cup \text{—} | \cup \text{—}$ . However this may be, we are as near to a hyporcheme in this song as possible. A glance at the words will prove the strongest argument (78 ff.):

θρέομαι φοβερά μεγάλη' ἄχῃ·  
 μεθείται στρατός· στρατόπεδον λιπών  
 ῥεῖ πολὺς ὅδε λεῶς πρόδρομος ἱππότης·  
 αἰθερία κόνις με πείθει φανείσ',  
 ἄναυδος σαφὴς ἔτυμος ἄγγελος. —  
 ἔτι δὲ γὰς ἐμᾶς πεδί' ὀπλόκτυπ' ὦ—  
 τὶ χρίμπτει βοάν· ποτᾶται, βρέμει δ'  
 ἀμαχέτου δίκαν ὕδατος ὀροτύπον. —  
 ἰὼ ἰὼ θεοὶ  
 θεαί τ' ὀρόμενον κακὸν ἀλεύσατε. —  
 βοᾷ ὑπὲρ τειχέων  
 ὁ λεύκασπις ὄρνυται λαὸς εὐ—  
 τρεπὴς ἐπὶ πόλιν . . .

We might assert that the litanies of the same women by which they interrupt the dramatic dialogue between the scout and the king are not very far from the hyporchematic manner. For in them, too, they exhibit an intense restlessness that finds expression in prayers not less ardent than Pindar's hyporchematic prayer to the eclipsed sun. But lest we appear too suspicious, let us seek for more certain examples. In the *Choephoroe* (935 ff.), when the faithful servants of the House of Agamemnon see at last Clytaemnestra, the faithless wife and cruel mother, dragged by her own son to an inhuman but just punishment, they are overwhelmed by the stupendousness and atrocious justice of the deed, and they express their state of mind in measure and movement that illustrate with wonderful skill the joy, the awe, and the reverence that

result from so terrible an event. The dochmiac rhythm is preferred here, too, in which the resolved paeon is frequently substituted for the bacchius. The ghastly joy of this hyporcheme reminds us of the manner of Sophocles, who almost always uses this form of melic poetry to express intense joy just before a great calamity occurs.

The third Aeschylean hyporcheme, we find in the *Eumenides* (490 ff.). When Athena discloses her plan for the trial between Orestes and the Furies, the Avengers of kindred blood sing and dance impatiently in cretic measures often mingled with lekythia, which are not very far from cretic cadence, if we separate the short syllable of the second trochee: — υ — | υ | — υ —:

Νῦν καταστροφαὶ νέων  
 θεσμίων, εἰ κρατή-  
 σαι δίκᾱ (τε) καὶ βλάβᾱ  
 τοῦδε ματροκτόνου . . .

Finally, the daughters of Oceanus, who come to comfort Prometheus (686 ff.), when they hear from Io the unspeakable sufferings which that unfortunate woman had to bear in exchange for Zeus's favor, are so perturbed that they sing and dance a short but none the less restless hyporcheme in cretics mingled with other measures equally reflective of concern:

ἔα ἔα, ἄπεχε, φεῦ·  
 οὐποθ' (ὦδ') οὐποτ' ἡὔχουν ξένους  
 μολεῖσθαι λόγους εἰς ἀκοὰν ἑμάν,  
 οὐδ' ὦδε δυσθέατα καὶ δύσοιστα  
 πῆματα, λύματα, δείματα κέν-  
 τρω ψύχειν ψυχὰν ἀμφάκει·  
 ἰὼ ἰὼ μοῖρα μοῖρα,  
 πέφρικ' εἰσιδοῦσα πρᾶξι' Ἰοῦς.

Sophocles is the favorite of all those who believe in the existence of the hyporcheme in tragedy. All find certain examples in his dramas, although there is some discrepancy as to the exact number. Thus Bernhardt and Sommerbrodt<sup>1</sup> find only two hyporchemes,

<sup>1</sup> G. Bernhardt, *Griech. Literat.*, ii, 1 (3), 631. Julius Sommerbrodt, *Scaenica*, Berlin, 1876, p. 221.

one in the *Trachinian Women* and another in the *Ajax*. To these, Christian Muff adds a third from the *Antigone*.<sup>1</sup> Walther consents to this and adds two more, one from the *Oedipus King* and the last from the *Philoctetes*.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the number may be, Sophocles for the most part has used this melic form in such a manner as to increase the tension of the tragic irony by making the chorus sing a joyful hyporcheme just before the occurrence of some fearful disaster.<sup>3</sup>

We have already had occasion to examine the hyporcheme of the *Ajax*. In the *Antigone*, the chorus of Theban citizens are joyfully affected by Creon's change to more human counsels and sing a hyporcheme, instead of a stasimon (1115 ff.). This was first noticed by Boeckh.<sup>4</sup> Here as well as in the *Ajax*, the exuberant joy of the hyporcheme is followed by extreme sorrow immediately afterwards, when the messenger comes to announce the frustration of all hopes, and the death of Antigone and Haemon.

Likewise, we have no doubt that what the chorus of Theban citizens sing in the *Oedipus King*, after the departure of the attendants to fetch the old shepherd who is to reveal the parentage of the king, is a hyporcheme. Deluded by vain hopes, they believe that they are about to hear of some divine parentage, and gladly pray to the mountain-god Cithaeron, Phoebus, Pan, and other gods patrons of the dance, to inspire them in their joyful song. The hyporcheme is very similar to that of the *Ajax*, and I cannot understand Muff's easy consent to Westphal's rejection of this song from the hyporchematic class.<sup>5</sup> Westphal rejects the hyporcheme for three reasons: first because it is not supported by ancient testimony; second, because its verses are composed in dactylo-epitrites; and third, because it would be ridiculous for old men to dance a hyporcheme. But if we are to reject this hyporcheme for the lack of ancient evidence, we can hardly retain any hyporcheme in the drama. That dancing old men would appear ridicu-

<sup>1</sup> Ch. Muff, *Die Chorische Technik des Sophokles*, Halle, 1877, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> H. Walther, *Commentatio de Graecorum hyporchematis*, ref. to by Muff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Aj.* 693; *Antig.* 1115; *Oed. R.* 1086; *Philoct.* 507, 391; *Trach.* 205, 633.

<sup>4</sup> *Abhandl. d. Berl. Akademie*, 1824, p. 88; Muff, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> Muff, *op. cit.* p. 177, and quotation from Westphal's *Metrik*, p. 679.

lous “οὐ φροντὶς Ἰπποκλείδῃ.” Dancing was never ridiculous for the old men of Greece even when it had the liveliness of a hyporcheme. According to tradition, even old Socrates took his exercise in dancing, and when he was discovered by his friends in this pastime, he said that dancing was a good exercise for every limb. Then the Theban citizens who compose the chorus in this tragedy are not old men, but in their full manhood, of the same age as Oedipus. Even if they are old men, in what do they differ from the old men of the *Antigone*, who, as Muff believes, most surely dance a hyporcheme? As for the metrical objection, the ancients were so versatile in their use of various metres, and the hyporcheme could be so varying in mood and theme that we cannot with any amount of positiveness deny the possibility of the dactylo-epitrite in the hyporcheme. On the contrary, it is very unlikely that Pindar should overlook his favorite metre in the multitude of the hyporchemes which he wrote.

The Trachinian women seem to dance a hyporcheme twice, if we consider as a hyporcheme the song they sing when the messenger announces the future return of Hercules (205-225). It is, however, more probable that it is a paean since we find in it phrases as *παιᾶνα παιᾶν' ἀνάγετε* and *ὠὼ παιᾶν*, although even good scholars like Schmidt, Nauck, and Muff<sup>1</sup> declare it a hyporcheme. Just like the hyporchemes we have already discussed, this song, too, whether a paean or a hyporcheme, is a song of joy rendered tragic by the following announcement of Lichas that Hercules is in love with Omphale, a fact that drives Deianira to despair. A surer example of the hyporcheme is the ode which the same women sing in joyful expectation of the return of Hercules while he is being rent to death by the fatal present of his unsuspecting wife (632-646).

All these Sophoclean examples, through the untimely joy they exhibit, render the sorrow that follows more intense. The only exception to this rule is the hyporcheme we find in the *Philoctetes*. In this play the chorus of sailors, who accompany Neoptolemus, when their master tries to deceive the unfortunate hero by manufacturing the false story of his quarrel with the chiefs of the Greeks

<sup>1</sup> See Muff, *Die Chor. Technik d. Soph.*, p. 196.

before Troy, contribute their share in the deception by conjuring Mother Earth to witness the supposed truth of Neoptolemus's words. Of course, even here we have the hyporchematic restlessness. The sailors are well aware that suffering has taught Philoctetes to be cautious and suspicious of everything. The fortune of their expedition depends on the success of their deception. Will the plan of wily Odysseus prove successful, or will Philoctetes suspect the truth, in which case their very lives would be at stake? This song is certainly nearer to the hyporchematic manner than that which the same sailors sing later (507) when, overcome with pity for the great sufferings of Philoctetes, they urge their chief to have compassion on him. Yet even that would be a justifiable hyporcheme.

The question whether Euripides has used the melic form in his tragic chorus is more elastic. Very few are inclined to follow Decharme in attributing any hyporcheme to Euripides. Most of the scholars, and among them Smyth, deny that it is found in any of the extant plays. Even those who yield some hyporchemes to our poet limit their number to two or three instances. Yet dance as such seems to be better developed in Euripides than either in Sophocles or in Aeschylus. Elaborate and difficult movements would be just the things to draw the attention of Euripides because of the demand of his age. Dancing was coming more and more to the foreground as a source of amusement throughout Greece, and the way to mime and pantomime was wide open. Probably, this was one of the reasons for the decadence of the tragic chorus after Euripides. The tragedians could not render their chorus so competently and pleasingly as professional dancers, who could imitate everything, and go through a rapid succession of movements with comparative ease owing to their habitual training. The Euripidean chorus made a bold stand in competition with the professional dancers. For that purpose Euripides was sufficiently determined and wealthy. Thus the lively hyporchematic manner is more often employed by Euripides than either by Sophocles or by Aeschylus. Again and again we come upon a choral song in most restless and rapid measure, and particularly adapted for mimetic dance. From a host of songs of this kind, Decharme declares only three to be hypor-

chemes: one in the *Electra*, one in the *Hercules*, and one in the *Bacchae*.

Especially interesting is the example taken from the *Electra* (859 ff.). The women of the country who come as friends of Electra, when they hear that Aegisthus is dead, express their great joy by singing and dancing the first strophe of the hyporcheme. Then Electra interrupts the song of her friends to make a joyful address to the sun. A little later, when she enters her hut to look for the crown which she is to place on Orestes' head, the women continue their hyporcheme to the end. It is quite possible that, while Electra sings her iambs which she addresses to the sun, the women of the chorus go through the movements of the dance to the tune of the lyre or flute and to the song of Electra while they themselves keep silent. In that case, we have the revival of the ancient manner we meet in the eighth book of the *Odyssey*, where one plays on the lyre and sings while the rest dance.

In the *Hercules*, I find at least three hyporchemes. The first is that which the old Thebans sing while the tyrant Lycus meets his just punishment at the hands of the returned hero. The second follows the entrance of Iris and Lyssa, and is somewhat commatic in character, being divided among the chorus, who have the main part, Amphitryon, and the messenger. The third follows the fearful report of the messenger (735-821, 875-921, 1016-1038).

The best examples, however, of Euripidean hyporcheme are found in the *Cyclops*, the *Bacchae*, and the *Rhesus*, of which three the choral part is mainly hyporchematic. The mimetic element in all these three plays is preëminent, and it entirely fills each chorus with imitative impulse. The Satyrs who compose the chorus of the *Cyclops* give us the best example of that hyporcheme which Athenaeus had in mind when he ranked the hyporcheme side by side with the comic cordax, and which, in common with the comic dance, he characterized as *παίγνιῶδες*. The parodos with the unfortunate Satyrs chasing after the rebellious goats, a task to which they have been unwillingly forced by an uncon-vivial master, is especially adapted for hyporchematic dance and song (41 ff.):

παῖ γενναίων μὲν πατέρων  
γενναίων τ' ἐκ τοκάδων,  
πᾶ δὴ μοι νίσση σκοπέλους;  
οὐ τᾷδ' ὑπὴνμος αὔρα  
καὶ ποιηρὰ βοτάνᾳ;  
δυνάεν θ' ὕδωρ ποταμῶν  
ἐν πίστραις κεῖται πέλας ἄν-  
τρων; οὐ σοι βλαχαὶ τεκέων;

— ψύττ'. οὐ τᾷδ' οὐ; οὐ τᾷδε νεμῇ  
κλιτὺν δροσεράν;  
ὦή, ῥίψω πέτρον τάχα σου  
— ὕπαγ' ὦ ὕπαγ' ὦ κεράστα —  
μηλοβότα στασιωρόν  
Κύκλωπος ἀγροβότα . . .

Nor are the rest of the choral songs of this play any less hyporchematic than the one we have just cited. They are all short, of a light and playful mood, and of a comic impatience and restlessness.

In sharp contrast with the Satyr chorus is the chorus of the Bacchantes. They give us the best illustrations of a tragic hyporcheme that results from religious exultation. In all their songs, the metre is resistlessly rapid, the feeling intense, the word expression overflowing with images and highly mimetic. The orgiastic spell runs through all their utterances and the hyporchematic form is the ideal lyric expression of their inner fervor. The best hyporchemes of the play are two. The more mimetic is that which they sing while in their imagination they follow Pentheus to the mountain glens and witness his horrible end (977):

Ἦτε θοαὶ Λύσσας κύνες ἴτ' εἰς ὄρος,  
θίασον ἔνθ' ἔχουσι Κάδμου κόραι,  
ἀνοιστρέσατέ νιν  
ἐπὶ τὸν ἐν γυναικομίμῳ στολᾷ  
λυσώδη κατάσκοπον μαινάδων·  
μάτηρ πρῶτᾳ νιν λευρᾶς ἀπὸ πέτρας  
ἢ σκόλοπος ὄψεται  
δοκεύοντα, μαινάσιν δ' ἀπύσει·  
τίς ὁδ' ὀρειδρόμων  
μαστήρ Καδμείων ἐς ὄρος ἐς ὄρος ἔμολ'



ἔμολεν, ὦ βάκχαι; τίς ἄρα νιν ἔτεκεν;  
 οὐ γὰρ ἐξ αἵματος  
 γυναικῶν ἔφν, λεαίνας δέ τινος  
 ὁδ' ἢ Γοργόνων Λυβυσσᾶν γένος.

The other is charged with excessive joy when they hear of the fulfilment of their expectations and of the horrible death of their god's enemy. Joy coming after a most sorrowful calamity rouses a storm of compassion and awe that rages far above the tragic irony of the Sophoclean hyporcheme. But Euripides always prefers extremity of passion (1153):

ἀναχορεύσωμεν Βάκχιον,  
 ἀναβοάσωμεν ξυμφορὰν  
 τὰν τοῦ δράκοντος Πενθέος ἐκγενέτα.  
 ὅς τὰν θηλυγενῆ στολὰν  
 νάρθηκά τε, πιστὸν "Αἰδαν,  
 ἔλαβεν εὐθυρσον,  
 ταῦρον προηγγητῆρα συμφορᾶς ἔχων.  
 βάκχαι Καδμεΐαι,  
 τὸν καλλίνικον κλεινὸν ἐξεπράξατε  
 ἐς στόνον ἐς δάκρυα.  
 καλὸς ἀγών, χέρ' αἵματι στάζουσας  
 περιβαλεῖν τέκνου . . .

The chorus of guards in the *Rhesus* furnish the unique example of the pyrrhic hyporcheme and offer the best explanation of the Pindaric scholion:<sup>1</sup> Τινὲς δὲ ῥυθμόν τινά φασι τὸ Καστόρειον, χρῆσθαι δὲ αὐτῷ τοὺς Λάκωνας ἐν τῇ πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους συμβολῇ. Διέλκεται δὲ ἡ τῆς πυρρίχης ὄρχησις, πρὸς ἣν τὰ ὑπορχήματα ἐγράφησαν. Certainly the war spirit so characteristic of the pyrrhic dance is the main note of the choral part of the *Rhesus*. The members of the chorus are armed just as any dancers of the pyrrhic would be. The feeling is always intense, as is natural with guards who keep watch in sight of the camp fires of the enemy in an open space. An unrelaxed strain is felt in all their songs and actions from the beginning to the end of the play. The parodos is certainly a hyporchematic pyrrhic dance in which the guards come before the tent

<sup>1</sup> See p. 148 of this paper.

of Hector in full armor, and Hector appears to take the part of a leader, likewise armed. This reminds us most vividly of the dance description of the *Iliad*. We only miss the part of the maidens in white raiment. But the very best example of hyporchematic pyrrhic dance is that which the same guards perform as they pursue, surround, and arrest Odysseus and Diomedes. Here we have an actual attack. The armed dancers rush from all directions with rapid steps and motions, lower their spears and point them at the fleeing spies, who are also armed and seem to perform the part of leaders in this dance. Evidently they thrust forward their shields in defence and retreat as the pursuers advance. The words are broken and vehement, reflecting a most excited state of mind. I believe we have here the most rapid and restless of all extant hyporchemes, and the unique example of a pyrrhic song and dance (672-729).

We might cite other examples of the use of the hyporcheme by Euripides. But I believe the examples we have quoted thus far are sufficient to prove that Euripides, far from neglecting this melic form, has even brought it to its perfection by making it the dominant expression of at least three of his plays which furnish us the best examples of three varying moods — the playful, the religious, and the warlike — of the hyporcheme. A master in the choral art, Euripides could not but be a master of the orchestric side of this art.

#### CONCLUSION

I conclude with the belief that Euripides, far from causing the degeneracy of the tragic chorus, has done his utmost to invest it with its due significance. He had to struggle against other poets of his time, who, unable to treat the chorus with his art, and conscious of the ineffectiveness of its functions as a religious and moral exponent, preferred to reduce the tragic chorus to a conventional, incoherent, and unwieldy factor, used to close the acts with mere musical interludes. But Euripides saw the impossibility of achieving the restitution of the chorus by burdening it with the functions of a religious or moral teacher, which with difficulty were preserved and developed by as ardent a master as Aeschylus. Sopho-

cles, facing the same problem, made his chorus an ideal spectator, whose work, besides the limited action in which it engaged, was to assume the moods of the audience and, by satisfying the spectators through its sympathetic attitude, to inculcate in them ethical lessons which, after all, were not deeper than the running popular morality of the day. Euripides could have followed the same course; but impatient of imitation, and too involved in the sufferings of humanity to assume Sophocles' resigned attitude and repose in art, he found a way of sustaining the dignity of the chorus by increasing its realism. His chorus is drawn with the people as its model, the people, who, being exposed to emotion and to sorrow, cannot be a moral or religious teacher nor enter upon philosophic speculations, but who, being susceptible of anger, joy, grief, and of all the storms of passions, show more flesh than reason and intellect. He injected more blood into his choreutae, brought them nearer to living common men and women whether wrathful or patient, daring or timid, cruel or tender, passionate or impassionate, impulsive or docile, selfish or generous, and let them interest the spectators by their kinship to them, enhanced by the poet's art through a finer fancy, a deeper emotion, and a stronger pathos than the Athenians were likely to express. Passion rules the wide realm of life. This material he moulds into musical words, sonant measures, and smooth-flowing rhythms, all filled with familiar but poetic images drawn from real life and with that divine spirit which is the enviable possession of the great minds of all ages. Other poets did their best to reduce the choral part of the ancient tragedy. But Euripides has done his best to assert the significance of the chorus as a legitimate component of the drama and there is no degradation or decadence to be found in him.

[This essay was presented as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Classical Department of Harvard University in 1915. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Herbert Weir Smyth for constant advice and help in planning and completing this paper, and to Professors Charles Burton Gulick and Chandler Rathfon Post for many valuable suggestions.]